REINCARNATION AND BIOLOGY

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A Contribution to the Etiology of Birthmarks and Birth Defects

VOLUME 1: BIRTHMARKS

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To the memory
of Walker Cowen

Contents

Volume 1
Birthmarks

Preface *xi*

Acknowledgments *xiii*

Part I. Introduction

Chapter 1. Introduction 3

Chapter 2. Bodily Changes Corresponding to Mental Images in the Person Affected 33

Chapter 3. Bodily Changes Corresponding to Another Person's Mental Images 89

Part II. Birthmarks

Chapter 4. Birthmarks Related to Previous Lives without Verification of Possible Corresponding Wounds 179

Chapter 5. Birthmarks Corresponding to Wounds Verified by Informants' Memories 249

Chapter 6. Birthmarks Corresponding to Wounds Verified by Medical Records 349

Chapter 7. Birthmarks Corresponding to Surgical Wounds and Other Skin Lesions on Deceased Persons 509

Chapter 8. Birthmarks Corresponding to Other Types of Wounds or Marks on Deceased Persons 543
Chapter 9. Nevi Corresponding to Wounds or Other Marks on Deceased Persons 637
Chapter 10. The Prediction of Birthmarks 725
Chapter 11. Changes in the Appearance and Relative Location of Birthmarks 881
Chapter 12. Correspondences of Details between Birthmarks and Related Wounds or Other Marks on Deceased Persons 931
Chapter 13. Discrepancies between Birthmarks and the Evidence of Reportedly Corresponding Wounds 1013
Chapter 14. Some Correlates of Birthmarks Attributed to Previous Lives 1091
Chapter 15. The Interpretations of Birthmarks Related to Previous Lives 1129

Appendix A. Summary of Relevant Events in the History of Modern Turkey 1147
Appendix B. Summary of Relevant Events in the History of Modern Burma (Myanmar) 1151

References to Volume 1 1155

VOLUME 2
BIRTH DEFECTS AND OTHER ANOMALIES

Part III. Birth Defects

Chapter 16. Introduction to Cases with Birth Defects 1171
Chapter 17. Birth Defects of the Extremities 1185
Chapter 18. Birth Defects of the Head and Neck 1381
Chapter 19. Birth Defects Involving Two or More Regions of the Body 1511
Chapter 20. Experimental Birth Defects 1625

Part IV. Internal Diseases

Chapter 21. Internal Diseases Related to Previous Lives 1655

Part V. Abnormalities of Pigmentation

Chapter 22. Abnormalities of Pigmentation that May Derive from Previous Lives 1725

Part VI. Other Aspects of Physical Appearance and Function

Chapter 23. Physiques, Postures, Gestures, and Other Involuntary Movements Related to Previous Lives 1867
Chapter 24. The Face as a Type of Birthmark or Birth Defect 1901

Part VII. Twins

Chapter 25. Twins with Memories of Previous Lives 1931

Part VIII. General Discussion

Chapter 26. General Discussion 2065

Appendix C. Summaries of Important Features of Principal Cases Described in This Work 2105

Appendix D. Alphabetical Guide to Cases Suggestive of Reincarnation Reported in Detail or Mentioned in This Work 2185

References to Volume 2 2199

Indexes 2215

Preface

It is now more than 30 years since I first began to appreciate the importance of birthmarks and birth defects in relation to reincarnation. As I became more convinced of the importance of the cases whose subjects have these features, I formed the idea of concentrating reports of them in a single work. With this intention, I held back from publication reports of some cases with birthmarks and birth defects that I had already drafted. For more than 20 years I published reports only of cases that had no birth defects and also either no birthmarks or ones of only marginal importance.

My plan for a single work devoted exclusively to the cases with birthmarks and birth defects envisaged more than the greater impact on readers that a large group of cases, compared with reports of single cases, might have. I hoped also from the large series to learn enough to make at least some crude inferences about the processes leading to the occurrence of some birthmarks and congenital malformations.

The number of cases of this type soon became considerable, and I could have stopped adding cases to it 10 years ago, as some of my advisors thought I should. However, two reasons suggested expanding the collection of cases further. First, the section of cases with birth defects seemed top-heavy with instances of murder in Burma, and I thought that diligent searching would turn up cases with birth defects in other countries and related to deaths not occurring homicidally. This expectation proved correct, and, although I did not in later years neglect Burmese cases involving murder, I am now able to show that a wide variety of deaths in different countries may figure in birth defects related to previous lives. Second, I had earlier some unusual types of cases with only one or two examples of each type: birthmarks related to earring holes, for example. Expanding the collection of cases would, I thought, increase the number of examples in the subgroups and thereby perhaps provide glimmerings of understanding about them. Other persons must judge whether the results have justified this additional effort, but I am glad I made it.

Some readers may hope that the series of cases is now large enough to warrant my making bold statements about the processes involved in the occurrence of birthmarks and birth defects. If hopes must be dashed, it is better for me to do so now than later. I will say, therefore, that, despite the hopes I had, readers should expect few answers to their questions about processes that are even provisionally acceptable, and much less any final understanding. Still, from a frank display of what we do not know, we may define more clearly the little that we do.

Page xii, Vol-1. Intentionally left blank, as in the original work.

Acknowledgments

Anyone who takes 20 years to write a book accumulates many debts for assistance from other persons, and mine seem almost innumerable.

Readers of this book will encounter often the names of four persons who for many years assisted me in the investigation of cases in their countries. In the later years of our working together they conducted preliminary investigations of cases for me with such competence that I sometimes felt that I was assisting them, or was even unnecessary. I could not have written this book without them. They are the late U Win Maung (Burma), Dr. Satwant Pasricha (India), Godwin Samararatne (Sri Lanka), and the late Reşat Bayer (Turkey). The first three mentioned read drafts of most of the reports of cases on which we worked together. Unfortunately, Reşat Bayer died (in 1977) before this work got well under way; and U Win Maung died, also too soon, in 1989.

I have also received much assistance during field trips from many other persons, including Dr. Chien Siriyanand, Nasib Sirorasa, the late Francis Story, the late Tem Suvikrom, and the late Dr. Kloom Vajropala (Thailand); Majd Mu'akkasah Dean (Lebanon); Tissa Jayawardene (Sri Lanka); the late U Tin Tut (later the Ven. U Dhammadara), U Nu, the late Daw Hnin Aye, Sujata Soni, the late Dr. R. L. Soni, and Maung Aye Kyaw (Burma); Dr. Bernard Kalu, Eddie Etunwoke, the late Patrick Onyekelu, and Nicholas Ibekwe (Nigeria); Dr. Jamuna Prasad, Dr. L. P. Mehrotra, the late K. S. Yadav, Chandra Prakash, and K. S. Rawat (India); Josephine Ndour (Senegal); Selim Koç (Turkey).

Several other assistants, associates, and colleagues have conducted interviews or otherwise provided information that I have included in the case reports, and for this I thank: Dr. Stuart Edelstein (Nigeria and Senegal); Dr. David Barker and Dr. Antonia Mills (British Columbia); Issam Abul-Hisn, Dr. Emily Williams Cook, and Dr. Sami Makarem (Lebanon); Champe Ransom, Roxanne Turner, and Betty Hulbert (Alaska); Tosio Kasahara and Dr. Tadao Ogura (Japan); Dr. Nicholas McClean-Rice, Parmeshwar Dayal, the late Professor P. Pal, Dr. Kirti Rawat, G. S. Gaur, Dr. Poonam Mittal, and Manjula Kamal (India); Ertan Kura, Dr. Can Polat, and Dr. Jürgen Keil (Turkey); Hernani Guimarães Andrade and Waldomiro Lorenz (Brazil); Dr. Erlendur Haraldsson, Dr. Nandadasa Kodagoda, and Hector Samararatne (Sri Lanka).

I can easily explain the poor quality of some of the photographs: I took most of the photographs of the birthmarks and birth defects myself. In my early days of studying birthmarks and congenital malformations, I brought the subjects to professional photographers in nearby towns, or took the photographers out to the subjects' villages. The results were often disappointing and sometimes appalling. Eventually

a friend, expert in photography, told me that my defects as a photographer were remediable and that with some lessons and adequate equipment I could take better photographs than most of the professional photographers working in the rather remote areas where we find many of these cases. He was right, and consequently I am less diffident about most of the photographs presented with the reports of cases investigated during the past 20 years. Even so, some of the better photographs have been contributed by my associates who needed less instruction than I did, or none at all. I have used photographs taken by U Win Maung, Dr. Polat, Tissa Jayawardene, Tosio Kasahara, Dr. McClean-Rice, Reşat Bayer, Dr. Edelstein, and Dr. Pasricha.

With the exception of the Tlingit spear (the photograph of which I obtained from the Sheldon Jackson Museum in Sitka, Alaska), all the bladed weapons illustrated belong to my own collection and were photographed at the University of Virginia. I obtained some pellets from shotshells included in one figure from J. Manton of Eley, I.M.I., Birmingham, England.

No one could regret more than I do that for reasons of expense colored photographs could not be printed for this work. The deficiency is particularly unfortunate in the depiction of some birthmarks, such as port-wine stains, that differ markedly in color from surrounding skin. It is also deplorable for the cases of Chapter 22 in which the subjects showed unusual pigmentation of skin, hair, and irides.

Several scientific journals have permitted me to reproduce figures originally published elsewhere. For such permission I am grateful to the editors and publishers of *The Lancet, Deutsche Medizinische Wochenschrift, Revue Métapsychique,* the *Journal of Scientific Exploration,* and the *Medical Journal of Australia.*

Dr. Elizabeth Turner kindly gave permission for the reproduction of the photographs of the x-rays of the baby who was the subject of the remarkable case of cursing that she reported in the *Medical Journal of Australia.*

Parts of Chapter 3 have been previously published in the *Journal of Scientific Exploration* and revised for inclusion in the present work.

The following authors, publishers, and copyright owners have given permission to reproduce photographs: W. B. Saunders Company for two photographs in *Surgery of the Ear* by George E. Shambaugh, Jr.; the Alaska Northwest Publishing Company for the photograph of a person figuring in a case report; Harper and Row Publishers for an illustration published in 1948 in *Modern Trends in Psychological Medicine,* edited by Noel G. Harris; Syndication International (IPC Services Ltd.) and London Weekend Television for photographs of Jennifer and Gillian Pollock; Dr. David Warrell for a photograph of a Russell's viper; and Georg Thieme Verlag, Stuttgart, Germany, for two photographs showing sudden loss of pigmentation.

Several museums have given permission to reproduce photographs of weapons, pictures, or other exhibits. These include: the Sheldon Jackson Museum, Sitka, Alaska; the Museum of Northern British Columbia, Prince Rupert, British Columbia; and the Royal British Columbia Museum, Victoria, British Columbia.

Dr. David Wiecking, former Chief Medical Examiner of Virginia, generously let me select from his immense collection of photographs of the bodies of mur-

dered persons some that show postmortem appearances of wounds similar to those that caused some of the deaths figuring in the cases I am reporting. I owe to him all but four of the illustrations of such wounds. Professor G. A. Gresham, University of Cambridge, and William K. Brinkhous, Office of the Chief Medical Examiner of North Carolina, kindly furnished the other four photographs of murdered persons. Dr. Wiecking also read and commented on several of the case reports involving deaths from gunshot and shotgun wounds.

Other persons not already mentioned assisted in the search for appropriate photographs, and for this help I thank Betty Hulbert, George Hall, Orfeo Fiocchi, Jagdish Chandra, and Grant Keddie.

Several persons have drawn my attention to cases or reports of cases bearing on the subject of this work, and for this I am grateful to Dr. Alan Gauld, the late George Zorab, Carlos Alvarado, Dr. Bernadette Chauvin, Prasit Karoonyavanich, Arya Bhushan, James Matlock, Dr. J. P. Pandarakalam, and Dr. Mills.

The late Dr. T. M. Ling, the late Dr. P. H. Henning, and Professor Lewis Hurst sent me personal communications about patients who developed localized physical changes when reliving traumatic experiences.

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For valuable assistance of other kinds in the research I thank Dr. Narender Chadha, Dr. David Kovacs, Dr. R. P. Fernando, Dr. Saw Ba Heng, Dr. Thavil Soonthararaksa, Susan Adams, Sandra Zoumbaris, Melody Counts, and Ina Hofland.

I am not an expert in many branches of science on which the cases here reported impinge, and I have sought and obtained much helpful advice from the following colleagues: Dr. David Wiecking (forensic pathology); Dr. Adrian Flatt, Dr. Raymond Morgan, and Dr. D. H. M. Woollam (birth defects); Dr. Richard Strohman (genetics); and Dr. Kenneth Greer (dermatology). Dr. Greer examined many of the photographs of the birthmarks, and I have generally followed the terminology he suggested in my descriptions of them.

I owe much to several friends who have allowed me to share with them some of my conjectures about processes. Their conversation, correspondence, and writings have enriched and corrected some of my ideas. In this connection I thank: John Beloff, Stuart Edelstein, Alan Gauld, Brian Goodwin, Rupert Sheldrake, and John Smythies.

Errors that remain despite the generous and abundant assistance I have received are my responsibility.

A glance at the references cited in this work will enable a reader to appreciate my indebtedness to the staffs of libraries, and for their assistance I particularly wish to thank the librarians of the Health Sciences Library and Alderman Library of the University of Virginia, the British Library, the University Library of Cambridge University, the Staatsbibliothek in Munich, the University Library of

Albert-Ludwigs-Universität, Freiburg i. Br., the Library, Institut für Grenzgebiete der Psychologie und Psychohygiene, Freiburg i. Br., the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris, the Biblioteca Bozzano-DeBoni in Bologna, and the National Library of Medicine in Bethesda, Maryland.

I was able to write most of the early drafts and revise much of the work during several leaves spent at the University of Cambridge, where the Master and Fellows of Darwin College always provided me with exactly the situation that I needed.

Dr. Emily Williams Cook read the entire work, all of it twice and some of it more often. Her comments have greatly improved the clarity of my exposition; and her vigilance about the smallest details—while never losing sight of the larger themes—has helped me to remove many mistakes.

I am also grateful to Dr. T. N. E. Greville for valuable comments from his reading of the text as well as for advice and assistance with statistical analyses. Dr. Paul Wender made some helpful suggestions after reading some parts of the text.

Patricia Estes deserves special thanks for having typed and transcribed the entire work through many revisions—always with a rare combination of patience and accuracy. After that, she surpassed us all in the exactitude of her proofreading; she did not allow a single Turkish dotless ı to be incorrectly dotted.

James Matlock came to the University of Virginia to compile the Indexes. I can praise their excellence because I had so little to do with them. Mr. Matlock has earned my readers' gratitude as well as mine.

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Dr. Lynn Flint, at Praeger Publishers, first realized the value of publishing all the details that this monograph includes and, after that, helped in many ways to implement its publication.

Financial support for the research reported in this work came mainly from the donations and bequest to the University of Virginia of the late Chester Carlson to whom I remain forever grateful. I have also received some additional assistance from the Fetzer Foundation, the James S. McDonnell Foundation, the Bernstein Brothers Parapsychology and Health Foundation, the Parapsychology Foundation, the Nagamasa Azuma Fund, and several anonymous donors.

Despite the abundance of the support just mentioned, publication of this large monograph faltered, until a generous donation from Ralph E. Fash of the Fash Foundation moved it forward again. To him I cannot sufficiently express my gratitude.

Dolly Ware played an important part in helping the project toward completion, and if I should not say here how she did this I can nevertheless give her my thanks.

These acknowledgments would remain shamefully incomplete without my thanks to the subjects of the cases here reported and to the other informants for them. I never counted them, but they number several thousand at least. For their patience in answering all my questions—which they may often have thought interminable—and for much gracious hospitality I am deeply indebted.

If Walker Cowen, the late Director of the University Press of Virginia, had lived, he would certainly have been the publisher of this work. He fostered it from its earliest inception and eagerly looked forward to its completion and publication. He had endorsed and published my earlier works on the same subject, sometimes admitting that they "are for the future." In gratitude for his friendship and support I dedicate the work to his memory.

There is one more person to whom I wish to express my thanks: my wife, Margaret. Her support has been particularly precious because, while devotedly encouraging this work, she has also—with the greatest gentleness—expressed skepticism about the conclusions to which it has led me.

Volume 1

BIRTHMARKS

Part I

Introduction

1

INTRODUCTION

WHAT THIS WORK IS ABOUT

This work presents evidence showing a close correspondence between images in a person's mind and unusual birthmarks or birth defects in another person. Because most persons have at least one birthmark, I should first explain in what respects the birthmarks I describe here differ from ordinary ones.

First, most of the birthmarks here described do not resemble in appearance the common birthmarks familiar to most persons. These ordinary birthmarks are usually areas of altered coloration due either to the presence of increased amounts of melanin (hyperpigmented macule or nevus) or to the proliferation and dilatation of superficial blood vessels (nevus flammeus). Most birthmarks of these types are not elevated or sunk below the surrounding tissues. Some of the birthmarks with which this work is concerned conform to these well-known types; most, however, have three-dimensional forms, are puckered, depressed or elevated (compared with the surrounding skin), and variously colored. Some appear indistinguishable from the healed scars of acquired wounds. Furthermore, most of the birthmarks that I describe here are much larger than "the ordinary birthmarks that everyone has."

The second distinctive feature of the birthmarks I describe is that someone attributes them to a wound (or perhaps some other mark) that the subject had in a previous life. The subject usually claims to remember some events of that life, although a few subjects have birthmarks but no imaged memories. In these latter cases, other persons—for example, the subject's parents—attribute the birthmark to some event in a previous life of the subject. Furthermore, it has been possible to show in most cases that the subject's birthmark (or perhaps birth defect) corresponds in location and other features to a wound or other mark on the deceased

person whose life the subject remembers or with whom he[1] is identified. In most instances our knowledge about the location and appearance of the wound on the deceased person derives only from the memories of persons who saw that person's dead body. However, in many cases we have obtained medical documents, usually postmortem reports, confirming the location and appearance of the wounds.

Birthmarks and birth defects of the kind that I describe in this book are important for two reasons. They contribute to the evidence and the interpretation of the cases suggestive of reincarnation in which they occur. As I have explained in my earlier books of case reports (Stevenson 1966/1974b, 1975b, 1977, 1980, 1983a), reincarnation is not the only paranormal[2] process we should consider when we try to understand these cases. For example, the subject may have an unusual gift for extrasensory perception; or his apparent memories may derive from the influence on him of a discarnate personality that imposes its memories on the living subject, thus in effect achieving a partial, if not a complete "possession" of the subject. These and other paranormal interpretations of a case may account for the subject's correct verified statements about the previous life and perhaps also for unusual behavior he may show that corresponds to behavior reported for the related previous personality.[3] Such explanations cannot, however, account for the occurrence of the birthmarks and congenital malformations themselves. These have developed during the embryonic life of the subject long before he could have manifested extrasensory perception. And with regard to the idea of possession, if we suppose that a discarnate personality could influence a new person as early as the stage of fetal development and could continue such influence into his middle childhood or later, it may fairly be asked whether this is not what we mean when we use the word *reincarnation.*

[1]I use the male pronouns when referring in general to the subjects of these cases and the deceased persons whose lives they claim to remember. This is partly for convenience and not intended to slight the importance of the many female subjects and deceased persons who also figure in the cases. However, if one must choose one sex or the other in such general references, the male sex would be more precise, because it happens that a substantially larger number of the subjects of reported cases of the reincarnation type are males. Among 1095 subjects from ten different cultures 62% were males and 38% females. Moreover, the biased ratio of male to female subjects occurred in the cases of all cultures, except Sri Lanka (Stevenson, 1987).

[2]I use the word *paranormal* in referring either to a communication without the recognized sensory channels or to a physical effect without the presently recognized physical processes. (The words *psychic* and *psychical* have the same meaning.) The word *telepathy* refers to paranormal communications between two or more minds, and the word *clairvoyance* refers to direct paranormal perception of objects or events (that is, without communication from another mind). Telepathy and clairvoyance are types of *extrasensory perception.* The term *psychokinesis* refers to paranormal physical effects. All these words and the processes they assume are at present defined negatively. I believe there is ample evidence warranting the postulation of the processes now called paranormal, and that in time they will be fully accepted and better understood within the concepts of science. When that happens, the word *paranormal* will become otiose.

[3]I describe my use of the phrase *previous personality* and define several other terms that I use frequently in a later section of this chapter.

In addition to contributing to the evidence of reincarnation, the cases I describe here suggest a hitherto neglected factor in the etiology of birthmarks, congenital malformations, and some other diseases. Some persons who have heard of a case of this type have suggested that the subject's statements and associated reported behavior are invented to explain a birthmark or congenital malformation the subject may have.[4] I think that this may happen in a few cases, and I have studied several in which I think it did happen. Yet even if we explain the other features of a case by a congenital malformation, we have not necessarily explained the malformation itself. The concept of reincarnation may, however, do just that. If cases of this type are best interpreted as instances of reincarnation, reincarnation helps us to understand the occurrence of some birthmarks and birth defects.

During the last century medical research has increased our knowledge of some of the proximate physical causes of birth defects. A variety of factors, such as genetic abnormalities, certain diseases of pregnant women, and alcohol and certain drugs taken by them, have been shown capable of causing them.[5] But causing them in which persons? Why is one person born with a birth defect when another—his twin brother perhaps—is not?

This is not a question that could interest committed materialists. They can ask about mediating causes and say, for example, that a certain baby was born with congenital heart disease because its mother had German measles in the first trimester of her pregnancy with it. But they cannot—without violating their principles—ask about more ultimate causes, such as why a particular *person*, as opposed to a particular *body*, has a congenital malformation. To materialists there is no person in the body, because there can be no person other than a body. To ask why one person has a congenital malformation and another has not is, for them, like asking why, when several dice are shaken in a cup and thrown out, one of them rolls so that six faces up, but the other five dice do not. It is, they would say, just a matter of chance.

The Western concept of chance can be traced back as far as Empedocles, but it seems to have become widely developed among scientists only during the past 300 years, beginning perhaps with the desire of gamblers and insurers to lessen their losses and increase their gains. In the 18th century Edward Gibbon

[4]My associate in Burma, U Win Maung, often reminded me that in Hindu-Buddhist cultures one does not require a *specific* explanation for a birth defect, because a *general* one lies at hand—in the doctrine of karma. Thus if a child is born with missing fingers, his parents simply attribute the malformation to *some* event in one of the subject's previous lives. They usually have little curiosity—and may have none whatever—concerning a *particular* event that might account for the defect in a more detailed manner. It is thus a matter of indifference to them whether the child later does or does not make statements about a previous life that appear to explain precisely why he happens to have the defect his parents noticed when he was born.

[5]Different authors have published different figures for the proportion of all birth defects occurring with unknown causes. Nelson and Holmes (1989) placed 43.2% of their cases in the group of unknown causes, but Kalter and Warkany (1983) placed 61.5% of cases in it. J. G. Wilson (1973) estimated 65-70% of cases to be of unknown cause, and Fraser (1977) stated that "roughly 60%" were in this group.

(1796/1907) wrote contentedly that "I have drawn a high prize in the lottery of life....the double fortune of my birth in a free and enlightened country, in an honourable and wealthy family, is the lucky chance of an unit against millions" (p. 217). The concept of chance has become deeply incorporated in modern biology. First, evolution is said to occur almost entirely by natural selection acting on mutations that occur by chance. Second, chance is said to govern the sorting of the gene-carrying chromosomes into the gametes: spermatazoa and ova. Yet much remains unexplained, especially about the uniqueness in body and behavior of each living being when born. Also in the 18th century, Alexander Pope (1733/1966) could write:

> All Nature is but Art, unknown to thee;
> All Chance, Direction, which thou canst not see;

A vindication of the research reported here would not nullify the role of chance in human and other matters; but it would show chance to have less influence in our lives than most scientists now believe it to have. Chance may lie farther back in the chain of causes leading to our present existences than we realize.

Returning to materialism—as a complete doctrine of human personality—those who think it gives an incomplete account of the nature of man can legitimately ask why one person has a congenital malformation while another does not. Moreover, inquirers willing to take reincarnation seriously also find it reasonable to ask a further question: why does a congenitally malformed person have the *particular* malformation he or she has and not some other one?

This work is, therefore, considerably more than a treatise on birthmarks and birth defects. It is also a study of the reasons for some of the differences between individual persons. Geneticists say we are all unique because of the random distribution of genes among the chromosomes of our parents during the formation of the gametes (sperm and ova), the union of which is the conception of an embryo that will become a new person. They would add that a further contribution to individuality comes from environmental influences after conception—uterine and postnatal. I am not denying the importance of genes and recognized environmental influences in contributing to the uniqueness of individuals; but I am presenting evidence that this uniqueness may derive also from another factor: reincarnation. Most scientists today believe that a person only comes into existence at the time his or her body is conceived by the union of the parents' gametes. However, we now have evidence suggesting that at least some persons have had existences before the conception of their bodies and that the events of these existences have influenced the conditions of their lives and contributed to their uniqueness as individuals. This evidence is not as strong as it may become; it certainly does not compel a belief in reincarnation, but it provides a rational (as opposed to a religious) basis for that belief. I believe that the cases of this volume provide additional justification for the belief.

In what I have said above I have been discussing two different levels of causation: that of "Why did this happen to *me*?" and that of "Why did *this* happen to me?" These are the questions of why a particular person had any birth defect whatever and why the person affected had the particular birth defect he or she had. I believe that cases of the reincarnation type can suggest answers to both these questions.

Some scientists may find the proposal of a mental influence on the form of an embryo even more surprising than the idea that we survive our deaths. The latter idea—of a life after death—is a familiar one to most persons; it is taught in the world's major religions and in nearly all minor ones too; and, although many educated Western persons no longer believe in a life after death, the possibility has been kept moot among them by a small group of scientists who have continued to collect and examine evidence bearing on the question. On the other hand, the former idea—that a previous incarnation could influence the form of an embryo—although not entirely new,[6] has never before been proposed with the amount of supporting evidence that I am able to offer in this work.

In here adumbrating my conclusion I have broken a common rule of scientific exposition according to which I should present my data before drawing inferences from them. I have felt justified in doing this, however, because I shall report and discuss the cases with regard to both of the two contributions that I think they offer. In some places I shall emphasize the support that the birthmarks and congenital malformations give to reincarnation as the best interpretation of the cases; and in other places I shall emphasize the value of the idea of reincarnation as an explanation for the occurrence of some birthmarks and birth defects, as well as some of the personality traits that contribute to making each of us a unique person.

In the remainder of this chapter I give information about the terms I have adopted in describing the cases, my methods of investigating them, their main features, and some relevant elements of the cultures in which they most frequently occur. In addition, I describe the sources and some of the limitations of the evidence the cases provide.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Definition of Terms Frequently Used

I use the phrase *previous personality* to designate a deceased person of whom a living person is identified as the reincarnation. The use of this term does

[6]Several earlier authors mentioned cases suggestive of reincarnation the subjects of which had birthmarks corresponding to wounds or other marks in a previous life (Delanne, 1924; Fielding Hall, 1898; Sunderlal, 1924; Veniaminov, 1840). The earliest case known to me was one in India investigated by the Mogul Emperor Aurangzeb. Although a fanatic Moslem, he must have had a liberal side, because he called before him witnesses to a case having several of the features we find in modern cases, including a birthmark (Subhan Rai, c. 1727).

not commit me to any explanation for a particular case. Moreover, I use it to designate a person of whose life a child has claimed to have memories even when no such person has been satisfactorily identified. I call cases of the former type "solved"; and those in which a deceased person corresponding to the child's statements has not been identified I call "unsolved."[7]

Although I sometimes refer to "deceased persons," I find the word *personality* in general more useful than the word *person.* We are apt to think of persons as having physical bodies—of being perhaps personalities *and* physical bodies. Therefore, use of the word *personality* enables me to consider the continuation of personal existence after death and to speak sometimes of "discarnate personalities."

Readers of this book will also frequently meet two other terms that I have adopted for convenience. I use the phrase *same-family case* in referring to cases in which the subject and previous personality are members of the same family (either immediate or extended). And I use the phrase *sex-change case* to indicate those in which the subject claims to have been a member of the opposite sex in a previous life.

I use the phrase *behavioral memories* to distinguish various types of nonverbal behavior—of which I shall give examples below—from the imaged memories that the subject has of names, events, and other details of the previous life that he can describe in words.

Methods of Investigation

The main methods of investigation used in the study of the cases reported in this volume do not differ from those I described in earlier volumes of case reports (Stevenson, 1966/1974b, 1975b) and in a general summary of this research (Stevenson, 1987).

I obtain most of the evidence in the cases during interviews with informants first (usually) for the subject's side of the case and then for that of the previous personality. I try to obtain corroboration for what one informant says by interviewing other informants about the same events or facts, and I attach importance to independent verification of what the subject and his family say through interviews with the previous personality's family. I give careful attention to opportunities the subject and his family may have had to learn normally about the previous personality. Whenever possible, I examine written or printed documents, such as birth or death registries, diaries, and horoscopes.

For the cases of the present work the only relevant addition to the above methods—but it is an important one—consists in the efforts that my associates and I have made to obtain medical documents that would corroborate or correct the oral testimony of informants concerning the location and appearance of wounds or diseases on the bodies of the deceased persons figuring in the cases.

[7]My colleagues and I have published two papers in which we reported seven representative unsolved cases and compared series of solved and unsolved cases in six different cultures with regard to some of their main features, (Cook et al., 1983a, 1983b).

Such documents are not easy to obtain—even when they exist—in most of the countries where these cases occur frequently. However, their value fully repays any effort made in locating and examining them. Success in replacing the memory even of the best informant with a contemporaneous written document justifies almost any amount of time spent in achieving it.

I would like to be able to say that in every case in which the subject had a birthmark or birth defect I have carefully interrogated the informants concerning the possibilities for the occurrence of the other commonly recognized proximate causes of birthmarks and birth defects. I refer here again to genetic factors perhaps augmented by marriages between cousins, and to diseases suffered or drugs taken by the mothers during the pregnancies from which the marked or malformed children were born. Unfortunately, in the early days of these investigations I was not as well informed about the recognized causes of birth defects as I subsequently became, and I did not ask the pertinent questions about possible known causes of birth defects. However, I have studied most of the cases with birth defects in recent years (after I learned more about their known causes), and I did ask these questions in all recent cases. Also, in a few cases where I had failed to do so earlier it has been possible for my associates or me to return to the informants and obtain the missing information.

Recurrent Features of the Cases

Each of the cases that I describe has individual strengths, and most have also some important weaknesses. I believe that the recurrence of certain features that are reported (in varying proportions in different cultures) increases their authenticity. These recurrent features derive their importance from having been observed and reported by persons who (for the most part) have known nothing about other cases; they cannot be due to a wish to have a case conform to some known model. I shall next summarize these recurrent features, and I suggest that the reader note their repetition throughout the case reports. Those who wish to make a special study of one or more of these features will find them indexed, both in this work and in my earlier volumes of case reports.[8]

It is rare for a case to have every one of these features, but most cases have at least three or four of them, and some have more. I shall list them in the order of their probable occurrence in the chronological development of a case:

1. Prediction of rebirth by an elderly person. This occurs sometimes among the tribes of northwestern North America and also less often in some cases of India, Tibet, Burma, and elsewhere. A person making such a prediction may

[8]Although I have tried to write the present work so that it can be read by someone unacquainted with my earlier books and articles of case reports, readers will find the cases here described easier to understand if they have already read at least some detailed reports of cases in which birthmarks and birth defects did *not* occur (Stevenson, 1966/1974b, 1975a, 1975b, 1977, 1980, 1983a). The general summary of this research that I have published may also be helpful (Stevenson, 1987).

also select the parents desired for the next incarnation. The person may also express hopes and wishes for changes in the circumstances of the future life compared with the present one.

2. Announcing dreams. These are dreams that seem to foretell the reincarnation of a deceased person. This person appears in the dream and conveys verbally or in other ways the idea that he will soon reincarnate. The dreamer is usually a married woman, and she has this dream shortly before or during her pregnancy with the subject who later remembers the life of the person whose rebirth the dream seems to announce. Announcing dreams occur often among the cases of northwestern North America, Burma, Thailand, and Turkey; but they also occur sporadically in cases of other countries. I have given further information about announcing dreams elsewhere (Stevenson, 1966, 1966/1974b, 1980).

3. Birthmarks and birth defects. These are the main topic of this work. By drawing attention to the other recurrent features of the cases, I hope to impress on readers that the cases whose subjects have birthmarks and birth defects—or at least most of them—resemble closely in their features cases whose subjects do not have such abnormalities.

In Table 14-1 I list the incidence of reported birthmarks and birth defects among the cases of different countries. In 895 solved cases from nine different countries or cultures 35% of the subjects had birthmarks or birth defects.

4. Statements the subject makes about the previous life. These are the subject's expression in words (and sometimes with gestures) of the imaged memories[9] he has of a previous life. Several features of these statements occur in most cases in which the subject makes statements. (In some cases the subject has no imaged memories whatever, or never expresses any.) The following three features of the statements are particularly common.

4a. Early age of the subject's first speaking about the previous life he appears to remember. The subjects nearly always start referring to the previous life between the ages of 2 and 4, but occasionally do so later (Cook et al., 1983b).

4b. Age of no longer speaking spontaneously about the previous life. Most of the subjects stop speaking spontaneously about the previous life between the ages of 5 and 8, but a few continue longer (Cook et al., 1983b). I have discussed elsewhere the difficulty of deciding when a subject has forgotten the previous life and when he has simply stopped talking about it (Stevenson, 1966/1974b).

4c. Frequent mention of mode of death in the previous life. Except for those subjects who say little or nothing about the previous life, a majority of subjects include among their statements some mention of the mode of death of the person whose life they remember. When the death is violent, 94% of subjects mention its mode; when it is natural, 52% do so (Cook et al., 1983b).

[9]In referring to the subject's memories of the previous life, I shall usually omit such qualifications as "claimed," "apparent," and "purported." This is for easier reading and in no way intended to beg the main question these cases present: that of whether reincarnation is or is not the best explanation for them.

Table 1-1. **Previous Personality's Mode of Death (Actual or Presumed) in Solved and Unsolved Cases**[a]

	Solved			*Unsolved*[b]		
Culture	*N*	*Violent*	*Natural*	*N*	*Violent*	*Natural*
Burma	168	76 (45%)	92 (55%)	37	35 (95%)	2 (5%)
India	193	95 (49%)	98 (51%)	47	40 (85%)	7 (15%)
Lebanon	94	65 (69%)	29 (31%)	18	17 (94%)	1 (6%)
Sri Lanka	35	19 (54%)	16 (46%)	55	49 (89%)	6 (11%)
Thailand	32	13 (41%)	19 (59%)	2	2 (100%)	0 (0%)
United States	14	6 (43%)	8 (57%)	30	29 (97%)	1 (3%)
TOTAL	536	274 (51%)	262 (49%)	189	172 (91%)	17 (9%)

[a]The data in this table derive from an analysis made in 1982 and were published in Cook et al. (1983b).

[b]For unsolved cases, figures are based on the mode of death mentioned by the subject.

The subjects rarely make their statements about the previous life casually. Instead, most of them speak with an intensity and persistence that surprises their adult auditors. Some use the present tense, even when they have at least a rudimentary understanding of time. Many are troubled by confusion over their identity, and this is particularly the case with children who remember lives as persons of the opposite sex or who, conscious of now being small, remember once having had the much larger body of an adult. Many of their memories are of unpleasant events, such as a horribly violent death. Many subjects also become torn by conflicting loyalties between present and previous families. To remember a previous life is almost never a pleasant experience.

5. Recognitions by the subject of persons, places, and objects with which the previous personality was familiar. These frequently occur when the subject meets members of the previous personality's family or goes to the community where he had lived.

6. Frequent occurrence of violent death in the previous life remembered. Among these cases, the concerned previous personalities have died violently in a proportion far greater than those of the general population in which the cases have occurred. Although the incidence of violent death in the previous personalities varies from culture to culture, it has been found to be high in all cultures so far studied. Table 1-1 shows the frequency of violent death in the solved and unsolved cases of six cultures. Table 14-1 provides similar data about solved cases from some additional cultures.

7. Unusual behavior on the part of the subjects. Informants frequently report behavior on the part of the subject that is unusual in his family but that corresponds with what is known about the previous personality or with what might have been expected of him, particularly given the circumstances of his death. Some of the types of unusual behavior reported are:

7a. Phobias (and aversions). These are especially for the instruments (such as weapons) of the previous personality's death, its site, or the people associated with it, such as the police or soldiers.

7b. Philias. These may be for people, clothing, food, or other objects familiar to the previous personality and liked by him. Especially prominent in many cases are seemingly nostalgic longings for the previous family accompanied by insistent demands to be taken to this family. Some subjects express a strong preference for the previous family over their own family, a situation that sometimes leads to alienation between the subject and his family. In some cases the philia corresponds to a craving for an intoxicant or addictive substance, such as alcohol or tobacco, that the previous personality used.

7c. Play. This may reproduce the previous personality's vocation, such as that of a doctor, soldier, mother, mechanic, or merchant. Some children's play may relive the last moments before death of the previous personality.

7d. Sexual precocity and gender dysphoria. Some subjects show sexual precocity between the ages of 2 and 5. They may direct sexual attentions toward the previous personality's partner or toward someone else who resembles that person.

Subjects who remember previous lives as members of the opposite sex usually show some attributes of the sex of the previous personality. They manifest this in habits of dress (cross-dressing), preferences for play and games of that sex, and other traits that are more commonly found in one sex than in the other.

7e. Untaught skills. These are occasionally reported for the subjects of the cases, but much less frequently than are the other recurrent features.[10]

An important aspect of the unusual behaviors shown by many of the subjects of these cases is the persistence of the behavior in many instances after—sometimes long after—the subject has forgotten the imaged memories of the previous life that found expression in his or her statements about it as a young child.

[10]My colleagues and I have published details about the frequencies of the features listed in this section (Cook et al., 1983b; Stevenson, 1977, 1980, 1983a, 1983b, 1986, 1987).

Some of the features occur with high frequency in all the cultures whose cases we have so far examined. Other features show wide variations from one culture to another, and a few, for example that of "sex change," are not reported at all in some cultures. Interested readers can find details about the culture-bound variations in the features of the cases in the publications cited above and also in the introductory chapters of background information that I have included in my earlier books of case reports.

Readers should remember that the different groups of people who believe in reincarnation often differ in their subsidiary beliefs about how and why reincarnation occurs (Stevenson, 1974a, 1987). Beliefs about reincarnation correlate not only with the prevalence of the cases, but also with some features of the cases the frequency of which varies between different cultures.

Table 1-2. **Comparison of Features of Cases in India with and without Birthmarks and Birth Defects**

Feature	*Without Birthmarks or Birth Defects*	*With Birthmarks or Birth Defects*	χ^2 *(1 df)*	
1. Subject's Age at First Recall of Previous Life (N=89)	Above median: 31[a] Below median: 37	Above median: 6[a] Below median: 15	1.905	N.S.
2. Subject's Age When No Longer Speaking Spontaneously of Previous Life (N=42)	Above median: 12[a] Below median: 20	Above median: 5[a] Below median: 5	0.482	N.S.
3. Number of Statements about Previous Life Subject Made (N=48)	Above median: 19[a] Below median: 14	Above median: 5[a] Below median: 10	2.404	N.S.
4. Subject Recalled Previous Personality's Mode of Death (N=109)	Yes: 58 No: 22	Yes: 26 No: 3	3.535	N.S.[b]
5. Phobias Related to Previous Life (N=62)	Yes: 16 No: 26	Yes: 6 No: 14	0.382	N.S.
6. Mode of Previous Personality's Death (N=114)	Natural: 50 Violent: 33	Natural: 11 Violent: 20	5.560	$p < .02$

[a]Cases with the first three features having the pertinent value at the median were not included in the analyses.

[b]The exact probability test for this feature (calculated by Dr. T.N.E. Greville) shows a marginal significance ($p < .05$).

I have said that the cases with birthmarks and birth defects have, in general, the same other features as those without birthmarks and birth defects. We made this similarity the object of a special study and compared the frequency of six main features in 114 cases of India with and without birthmarks and birth defects (Table 1-2). The features compared were: the subject's age at first recall of the previous life; the subject's age when no longer speaking spontaneously about the previous life; the number of statements the subject made about the previous life; the frequency with which the subject recalled the previous personality's mode of death; the occurrence of phobias related to the previous life; and the mode of death in the previous life. With one exception, there were no statistically significant differences (with a chi-square test) in these features between the cases with and without birthmarks and birth defects. The exception occurred in the mode of death. It was more

often violent in cases with birthmarks and birth defects than in those without ($p < .02$). However, this result is not surprising, because most of the birthmarks and birth defects that we investigated—as the reader will soon learn—corresponded to fatal wounds and therefore to a violent death of the previous personality.

Before leaving the subject of the features of the cases I wish to emphasize that they have different values as evidence in our appraisal of paranormal elements in the cases. For example, a prediction of a reincarnation may seem to provide unusually strong evidence of such elements when a laterborn child makes statements referring to the life of the person about whom the prediction is made or shows behavior concordant with that person's character. However, such a prediction—and this could begin with a statement by a person before death or with an announcing dream—prepares the parents of a child to expect him or her to make certain statements or show certain behavior, and their expectations may guide the child to do these things. I do not say that parents who know about a prediction will inevitably have a distorting influence on the child, but they may have. In a later section of this chapter I return to the important topic of the different values of the several types of evidence in the cases.

Information about Cultures Where Most of the Cases Occur

A satisfactory understanding of many of the details of these cases requires some information about the cultures in which they occur. Because particular beliefs about reincarnation often correlate with the features of the cases, the reader should know something about the variety of the beliefs that different peoples hold. I shall therefore provide here some simplified information about aspects of the belief in reincarnation and features of the cases in which the various cultures differ from each other.

India. The majority of the inhabitants are Hindus who believe in reincarnation as do the much less numerous Jains, Buddhists, and Sikhs. Most Moslems and Christians in India do not believe in reincarnation. The Hindu belief emphasizes the desirability of achieving Nirvana conceived as a state in which the individual loses his or her personal identity and becomes merged with God. Hinduism also emphasizes the effects of conduct in one life on the circumstances of another one, not necessarily the one immediately following. Grave wickedness may lead to reincarnation in an animal body. Claims of sex change from one life to another occur but are not frequent.

Burma (Myanmar). The majority of the inhabitants are Theravadin Buddhists. Like Hindus, Buddhists believe that misconduct in one life has detrimental effects in another one or may lead to rebirth as an animal. The subjects of cases in Burma frequently remember lives as members of the opposite sex. In most Burmese cases the deceased person whose life the child remembers belonged to the same immediate or extended family or was at least known to the subject's family. Announcing dreams occur frequently in Burmese cases and so do birthmarks and birth defects. Burmese subjects often claim to have some memories of an existence between death and rebirth.

Thailand. The Thais are also predominantly Theravadin Buddhists and have beliefs about reincarnation similar to those of the Burmese. There are proportionately fewer same-family cases in Thailand than in Burma, and claims of sex change from one life to another are less common, although still more frequent than in most other countries. Many Thai subjects claim to remember experiences between death and rebirth.

Sri Lanka. The majority of the inhabitants of Sri Lanka are Sinhalese and Theravadin Buddhists. However, some Sinhalese are Christians, and the substantial minority of Tamils in Sri Lanka are mostly Hindus. Sinhalese Buddhists, in their everyday practice, may appeal to Hindu gods, such as Kataragama (Skanda). Apart from this tendency to syncretism (with Hinduism) the beliefs of the Sinhalese Buddhists about reincarnation closely resemble those of the Burmese and Thais.

The Sinhalese have few same-family cases. Subjects who mention many details about a previous life often fail to state enough personal names to permit tracing a deceased person corresponding to their other statements; there are therefore many unsolved cases in Sri Lanka. In the solved cases the two families concerned often live far apart. Claims of having changed sex from one life to another occur. Announcing dreams almost never figure in the cases of Sri Lanka.

Turkey. Most of the Turkish cases known to me have occurred among Arabic-speaking Alevis inhabiting the south central provinces of Adana and Hatay. The Alevis are a sect of the Shiite branch of Islam. They believe in reincarnation, but without a concept supposing that conduct in one life influences circumstances in a later one; as throughout Islam, conduct is assessed at the Day of Judgment. Most Alevis regard sex change from one life to another as impossible, and I know of only one case with such a claim among them.

Lebanon. Nearly all the cases of Lebanon that I have investigated have occurred among Druses. Their religion ultimately derives from the Shiite branch of Islam, but they have separated from it so much that they regard themselves as belonging to a separate religion. They believe that reincarnation (as a newborn baby) occurs immediately after death. They do not believe in the possibility of sex change from one life to another. Conduct in one life does not affect the circumstances of a later one, but is summed and rewarded or punished at the Day of Judgment.

Tlingit (of Alaska). Although most Tlingit are formal Christians, most also adhere, at least to some extent, to their traditional religion, which includes the belief in reincarnation. The Tlingit have a matrilineal society, and their cases reflect their belief in the importance of kinship through the mother; in the majority of the Tlingit cases that I have studied subject and previous personality were related through the subject's mother. The Tlingit do not believe in sex change from one life to another, and they do not believe that humans reincarnate in animals. Their traditional religion is life-affirming, and, far from wishing not to reincarnate, they hope to do so soon. Many of them

believe that premortem wishes about the next life, such as for particular parents, can influence the circumstances of that life. Announcing dreams occur frequently among the Tlingit.

Haida (of Alaska and British Columbia). The Haida live on the Queen Charlotte Islands of British Columbia and also at the southern end of southeastern Alaska. Like the Tlingit, the Haida are formally Christians, but their traditional religion persists and includes a belief in reincarnation. Theirs is a matrilineal society. Most of the Haida who were my informants did not believe that a person can change sex from one life to another, but a few considered this possible. The Haida do not believe that humans reincarnate as animals, but they do believe that one human may reincarnate in two or more later physical bodies ("soul-splitting"). Announcing dreams occur often in Haida cases, but birthmarks and birth defects seem less prominent than among the Tlingit.

Tsimshian and Gitksan (of British Columbia). The Tsimshian live on the northern coast of British Columbia. The linguistically related Gitksan live inland, mostly along the Skeena River. Both are matrilineal societies. Reincarnation figures prominently in the traditional religions of both groups. Their beliefs about it closely resemble those of the Haida. Like the Haida, they believe in "soul-splitting" or multiple reincarnations.

Igbo (of Nigeria). Most Igbo are formal Christians but remain more or less adherent to their traditional religion. This includes a strong belief in reincarnation. It is life-affirming, and the Igbo consider the state between terrestrial lives an undesirable limbo. In the majority of the Igbo cases that I have investigated the subject and the previous personality were related through the subject's father. The Igbo attach importance to identifying the person of whom a newborn baby is the reincarnation. For this they rely on birthmarks and birth defects said to correspond to wounds or other marks on a deceased person. They also accept the determinations made by oracles, some of whom specialize in identifying the previous incarnation of an infant. The Igbo believe in sex change from one life to another, and 18% of their cases that I studied showed this feature. They believe that the soul of a person who has died may become divided and reincarnate in parts in two or more other physical bodies. The Igbo (and other groups of West African peoples) believe a baby who dies may be reborn in the same family and then die again (still an infant) only to be reborn once more into the same family. The Igbo call such "repeater children" *ogbanjes*, and they have developed measures for thwarting the intention (as they see the process) of the baby to die young.

Readers wishing more information than I have given above about aspects of the culture in which a particular case occurs can find it in the chapters introducing reports of cases in the several volumes of my *Cases of the Reincarnation Type* and in some additional separate publications by myself and others. These books and articles contain further references to published information about the cultures concerned. I list below the publications containing this information:

India	Stevenson (1966/1974b, 1975b)
Burma	Stevenson (1983a)
Thailand	Stevenson (1983a)
Sri Lanka	Stevenson (1966/1974b, 1977)
Turkey	Stevenson (1970a, 1980)
Lebanon	Stevenson (1966/1974b, 1980)
Tlingit (of Alaska)	Stevenson (1966, 1966/1974b)
Haida (of Alaska and British Columbia)	Stevenson (1975a)
Tsimshian (of British Columbia)	Ravenhill (1938); Seguin (1985)
Gitksan (of British Columbia)	Adams (1973); Mills (1988a, 1988b, 1994)
Igbo (of Nigeria)	Stevenson (1985, 1986)

Additional Information about Customs, Ceremonies, and Rituals

Throughout the case reports I have from time to time added information about customs, ceremonies, and rituals that had no immediate bearing on the case described or did not affect judgment about the evidence in it. I have deliberately included this information in order to help readers appreciate important features of the cultures in which these cases are found most abundantly. Readers not already familiar with these cultures will notice that their members believe that persons live after death, that dead persons sometimes remain present among living ones, and that dead persons can at times make themselves known to living ones.

Spelling and Usage of Personal Names in Asia and Africa

I have romanized the spelling of nearly all the personal names concerned in the cases of Asia and Africa. Different speakers and writers do not always romanize what appears to be the same name in the same way. In India, for example, one can find the name *Parmod* sometimes spelled in the English alphabet as *Pramod.* I have generally harmonized the spelling of such names, so that the reader will not stumble over trivial inconsistencies; however, I have retained a few idiosyncratic spellings where a difference seemed relevant to the understanding of a case or would be important to the persons concerned in it.

The use of proper names (for persons) varies widely among the different countries from which these cases come. The following comments about usages may assist the reader.

Sri Lanka. Initials preceding a name indicate a person's family, and a wife may or may not assume her husband's name. For example, R. M. Romanis and R. M. Gardias are brothers; T. N. Alice is the wife of R. M. Gardias. Her

father would have used the initials "T. N." in front of his name, and she has not adopted her husband's family initials. However, some Sinhalese use a given and a family name in a manner similar to the use of names in the West, for example, Gamini Jayasena and Disna Samarasinghe.

The Sinhalese usually place a name of relationship *after* a proper name instead of before it. Some of their words for relationships are more specific than corresponding English words. For example, *akka* means older sister and *nangi* means younger sister. In addition, they may use a pet name or the occupation of the person named when they refer to him or her. The following examples will illustrate these customs: "Mudalali bappa" (uncle who is a merchant); "Malkanthie akka" (my older sister Malkanthie); "Mirris nanda" (the aunt who cooks chilies); and "Charley uncle" (Uncle Charles).

Burma. A person retains the same given name or names throughout his or her entire life. Family names are rarely used, and only among some Westernized families. A girl is addressed by the honorific *Ma*, and when she reaches a certain stage of maturity (whether or not she marries) she will be addressed by the honorific *Daw*. Thus Ma Tin Hla will (probably) become Daw Tin Hla at some point in her late 20s or early 30s. (If she marries, she does not take her husband's name.) Similarly, boys are given the honorific *Maung* and, when they become older, receive the honorific *U*, so that Maung Win Sein becomes, at a certain stage, U Win Sein. The honorifics may be assigned as given names; this is particularly true of the boy's honorific *Maung*, so that we may meet Maung Hla Maung, who, as he becomes older, is called U Hla Maung.

Sometimes the less respectful and more familiar word *Ko* is used in addressing males, instead of *Maung* and *U*.

The use of honorifics is so customary and so important in Burma that I have preserved them in the case reports, even though I have not usually referred to the persons concerned in the cases of other countries with honorifics. However, in the list of cases in Appendix D, I have given the Burmese cases in alphabetical order according to the subject's first given name, omitting the honorific.

At the beginning of a case report, especially in describing the subject's infancy and childhood, I usually use the junior honorifics *Maung* and *Ma* in front of the subject's name. When I consider the subject at later stages of life, I change these to *U* and *Daw*.

In 1989 the name of the country called Burma was changed to Myanmar, and the name of its capital, Rangoon, was changed to Yangon. Some other place-names were also changed. Because all the cases in that country were investigated before 1989 (with the exception of a few details learned about later), I have used the old names in the case reports.

Thailand. Given and family names are used as in the West. The word *Nai* is an honorific approximately equivalent to *Mr.* in English, and the female *Nang* similarly corresponds to *Mrs.* *Khun* is a more respectful honorific, used in addressing both men and women. It is customary and not impolite for Thais to address each other, and be referred to, by a combination of an honorific and the

person's first name. Thus we may speak of "Nai Soey" and "Nang Hom" (in the case of Som Pit Hancharoen). Dr. Chien Siriyananda may be referred to as "Dr. Chien," and Professor Kloom Vajropala as "Professor Kloom."

Nigeria. Among the Igbo a father's name usually figures in that of his children, but is not necessarily transmitted to their children as occurs in Western names. Thus Ibekwe Njoku was the son of Njoku, but his son was Nicholas Ibekwe. Similarly, Nwobodo Okonkwo was the son of Okonkwo Ago, but his son was Onuchukwu Nwobodo.

Igbo names frequently express some reaction of joy or, it may be, of disappointment after the birth of a baby.

Turkey. The names of Turkish informants—at least since all Turks were required to have or adopt surnames in 1935—present no difficulty; but their correct pronunciation may. For this the following information should be helpful.

In the 1920s Kemal Atatürk instigated a thorough reform of the Turkish language. It ceased to be written in the Arabic script and was provided with a romanized alphabet. In the process a complete consistency was effected between the letters as written and their corresponding pronunciation. Every Turkish letter is always pronounced in the same way under all circumstances.

Many of the sounds indicated by the Turkish alphabet correspond to those of the English alphabet and will give no difficulty to English-speaking readers. The following differences are noteworthy:

"c" is pronounced like "j" in "judge."
"ç" is pronounced like "ch" in "church."
"s" is pronounced like "s" in "salt."
"ş" is pronounced like "s" in "sugar."
"g" is pronounced like "g" in "garden," not as in "general."
"ğ" has the effect of lengthening the preceding vowel and is itself, for all practical purposes, not sounded.

Turkish has two vowels corresponding to English "i." One of these, written like "i" in English, has the sounds of the English "i" in "pit" and "machine," according to whether it is short or long. The dotted "i" retains its dot when capitalized, so that it is then written as "İ." In addition, Turkish has a letter "ı" written without the crowning dot found in the European languages. This is an extremely short vowel, the sound of which can be approximated by trying to pronounce the word "muddle" almost as if it had no "u," by running the "m" and first "d" together.

Umlauts on vowels affect their sounding in a manner similar to their effect on German vowels.

A circumflex accent over a vowel indicates a slight y-sound between the vowel and the preceding consonant. Thus the name *Dellâl* is pronounced as if spelled in English as *Dellyal.*

I have spelled all proper names in the Turkish alphabet, with the exception of Istanbul, which I have spelled in the form familiar to English-speaking readers.

Real Names and Pseudonyms

The names used in these studies are a mix of real names and pseudonyms. I have used pseudonyms almost exclusively in certain areas, Western Europe and the Americas, for example, and, of course, where informants asked me to do so, or when I thought that the person should be given some concealment.

For the same reasons, the names of towns or villages figuring in a case are not necessarily the names of the actual locations. However, in cases where geographical factors, such as distances between communities, bear on the understanding or interpretation of a case, I have given them as precisely as I can.

This work is a medical monograph, although it touches on several branches of knowledge outside medicine. I did not have a professional medical relationship with any of the subjects of the cases; yet most of them knew that I am a physician, and this knowledge probably increased their willingness to allow medical aspects of their cases to be studied and themselves to be photographed. Accordingly, I believe that their privacy should be respected.

Persons wishing additional details about a case should apply to me and provide sufficient information about their interests and research strategies to warrant my providing such details.

Criminology and Forensic Medicine in Asia and Africa

During the years 1910-1970 (when most of the deaths mentioned in this volume occurred) criminology, as known in the West today, did not exist in Asia and Africa, except in larval form in some of the larger cities. Ballistics, fingerprints, and the examination of weapons and of the sites of crimes were all almost unknown. Autopsies were performed when conditions permitted, but often they did not. Dead bodies were sometimes discarded or would decompose before they could be examined. The judicial conviction of a murderer therefore depended almost entirely on eyewitness testimony. This in turn was often unavailable, either because the eyewitnesses were themselves involved in the crime or because the criminals had cowed them into silence.

Readers will notice that in some of the murders figuring in these cases several assailants attacked the victim at the same time, often with a variety of weapons. This could result in several wounds of different kinds and severities. At times it must have been difficult to say which one or which ones of these wounds had been fatal.

In several countries where cases with birthmarks and birth defects have occurred abundantly, international, civil, or guerilla wars have exacerbated the usual inadequacies of criminal investigation. This remark applies particularly to Burma from 1942 to about 1955 during the periods of Japanese occupation and subsequent insurgency (see Appendix B). South central Turkey was an area of lawlessness during the declining years of the Ottoman Empire; at the end of the First World War, France occupied this area—Cilicia until 1923 and Hatay until 1939 (see Appendix A). Sri Lanka had a major insurgency in April 1971. And

Lebanon was in a state of military and civil disorder during the 1970s and 1980s. In the regions and periods mentioned, some of the inhabitants engaged in ordinary banditry and local quarrels while others participated in the more official wars and rebellions. These distinctions often became blurred, and a soldier fighting for "national liberation" or "regional autonomy" might find occasion to settle accounts with personal enemies along the way. Under these circumstances, even more than ordinarily, killings had no witnesses, or none who would talk about them; bodies were often tossed aside on the ground or thrown into rivers, and records were frequently destroyed or lost.

I mention these limitations in the hope of sparing readers some of the frustration that I myself have experienced through often not having for the cases what would be considered in the West elementary medical information.

Postmortem reports, especially in Asia, often do not provide all the information we might wish to have. Physicians performing the postmortem have the duty of determining the cause of death. They therefore give their main attention to the wounds that were probably fatal. They are unlikely to bother noticing, let alone make a note about, old scars, macules, and other nevi, all of which sometimes figure in these cases. The descriptions of wounds usually give their size, but the writer nearly always locates a wound less precisely than we would wish for present purposes. In the Asian postmortem reports pathologists rarely endeavor to show, or even conjecture, the order in which several wounds were inflicted. Furthermore, some of the postmortem reports I have studied show signs of haste and carelessness, both of which can lead to imprecision. Still, we cannot pick and choose among postmortem reports; having accepted them as more reliable than the later memories of informants, we cannot set one of them aside because its findings surprise us or do not accord with other evidence. Nevertheless, I shall later mention a few postmortem reports about which I have had serious doubts.

Medical Diagnoses

Part IV (Chapter 21) is entirely devoted to internal diseases that correspond to diseases from which the previous personality suffered and sometimes died. In this chapter, and also in connection with other case reports, I mention any medical diagnoses that informants reported to me. Sometimes these were entirely straightforward and agreed with the description of the person's symptoms; in a few cases I could discuss the previous personality's condition with a physician who had treated him. However, for other cases I could not obtain testimony or other evidence warranting any certainty about the diagnoses. The informants would sometimes tell me the person had "died of fever" or would mention a layman's term for a group of symptoms that might have had several origins. Under these circumstances I have advanced my own conjecture of the illness in medical terms. In doing this I have mentioned the symptoms that seemed to justify my inference.

Determination That an Abnormality of the Skin is a Birthmark

The appearance of some abnormalities of the skin, such as nevi, is sufficiently distinctive so that one can assert that they were present at birth and not acquired postnatally. We cannot always be so confident in appraising other marks on the skin. A child of 2, and even more one of 6 or 7, may have numerous marks resulting from cuts, abrasions, furuncles, insect bites, or other injuries or diseases. With such a child how can one be sure that one is looking at a birthmark and not at a scar of a postnatal lesion?

To answer this question the most authoritative informants are the subject's parents, especially his mother. Sometimes a grandmother, midwife, or nurse may have been the first to notice a birthmark and draw it to the attention of the baby's parents. I require that the mark have been first noticed by some such responsible adult (or, rarely an appreciably older sibling) within a few days or—at the most—a few weeks of the subject's birth. I allow two exceptions to this rule. In some instances I have first met the subject when he was an adult, and his parents or other older informants had died or were unavailable to testify concerning the congenitality[11] of the mark to which the subject drew my attention. (Readers can easily identify these exceptional cases by the information I give in the case reports about the subject's age when I first met him or her and about the other informants I interviewed for a case.) A second type of exceptional case occurred when the subject's parents failed to notice a mark on his or her body until the child began to speak about a previous life, pointed to an area of his or her body, and said, for example, that he or she had been stabbed there in the previous life. The parents may then have examined the indicated part of the child's body and found a mark there that they had not noticed before. This may be a birthmark; but I have known errors to arise from such late attempts to identify birthmarks. (The case of Vasantha Gunasekera, described in Chapter 13, offers an example of such an error.) Occasionally, I have myself looked for and found a birthmark that had not been mentioned to me or, sometimes, not even noticed before my examination. (I shall mention these late identifications of the marks in the few reports of cases of this type that I have included.)

Several other aspects of the birthmarks may help to establish their congenitality. First, their appearance is usually that of congenital marks and unlike that of scars from postnatal injuries and illnesses. My medically trained readers will appreciate this difference readily; but others may do so only after studying the photographs of the birthmarks. Second, the informants sometimes remark that at the subject's birth and for some days afterward the area of the mark bled or discharged blood, serum, or pus. (This occurred in at least 15 cases.) A few subjects have been

[11]The word *congenitality* is not in the *Oxford English Dictionary*, and so I have had to invent it. It means "the state of being present at birth" and implies no judgment as to how the observed condition arose: from genetic factors, from abnormalities of chromosomes and uterine life, or—as this book suggests may happen—from mental influences on an embryo or fetus.

taken to hospitals or doctors for the medical treatment of such open lesions. These aspects of the mark in question help to fix its congenitality in the minds of the informants. It seems unlikely that they would gratuitously add these details about discharges from the mark if they were referring to a postnatal injury; such an injury would be expected to have a discharge of blood, serum, or pus, and the feature would not become one to be especially remarked. Third, the parents have sometimes stated that a mark has shifted in position with the subject's growth from infancy to later childhood or that it has faded to some extent or completely disappeared. (In Chapter 11 I discuss, with examples, the shifting and the fading and disappearance of birthmarks.) Postnatal lesions may also shift in position and fade, but testimony about these features at least shows that the parents had identified the mark in question at an early stage of the child's life and had monitored changes in its later location or appearance as they probably would not have done with the scars from cuts, furuncles, and other postnatal wounds and diseases.

The parents in some cultures look for and notice birthmarks much more than those in others. These cultures are particularly those in which it seems important to identify some notable person—a chief, celebrated warrior, or famous fisherman—when he reincarnates. The adults of these cultures attribute to the newborn child the prestige and rank of this deceased person. The Tlingit of southeastern Alaska and the Igbo of Nigeria belong in this group; adults of these cultures who have not lapsed from their traditional religions will, almost as a matter of course, inspect a newborn baby for birthmarks, which will help them identify the baby's previous personality. The Burmese also often examine a newborn baby for birthmarks. They do not do this because they wish to give the baby the prestige of the predecessor personality; they are more likely to examine it in order to confirm expectations (and hopes) about the identity of the reincarnating personality that an announcing dream has aroused.

In all three of the cultures just mentioned I have found a high incidence of same-family cases; the presumed previous personality is already known to the baby's parents, and they are interested in recognizing him when he reincarnates. In some other cultures, however, few same-family cases occur (or have been reported to me), and the parents of a baby do not expect that in its previous life it was anyone they knew. The Hindus of India and the Sinhalese Buddhists of Sri Lanka are in this group, and the parents of these countries do not, in general, give any more attention to birthmarks than would parents of the West, where only a minority of persons believe in reincarnation. Whether birthmarks occur less often in India and Sri Lanka or parents notice them less often there (the marks sometimes later fading) should be a topic for further inquiry. I mention these differences in attitudes toward birthmarks in different cultures because it bears on the appraisal of the testimony concerning the congenitality of marks on the subject's body. I think that—other things being equal—we can properly attach more importance to the testimony of a Tlingit, an Igbo, or a Burmese on this matter than we can to that of a parent in India or Sri Lanka. Members of the former group are usually aware of a need to notice birthmarks when a baby is born; those of the latter group are not.

I have satisfied myself in every case that a mark in question is a birthmark and not the scar of a postnatal injury; but I do not claim infallibility in this matter, and in certain cases readers may reach opinions different from mine. In all cases that seemed to me doubtful I have stated fully the weaknesses of the testimony.

As I have mentioned, many of the birthmarks fade as the child grows older. In some instances, I have used arrows on the photographs to indicate a mark that had almost completely faded or that for some other reason a reader might not easily identify in the photograph.

In all but a few cases I have myself examined the subject's birthmark or birth defect, and when I have not done so, I have stated this. The exceptions are of two types. First, in a few cases I have obtained all the information I could about the case, but for one reason or another could not meet the subject; in some of these instances the subject had died before my investigation, but the case had some unusual feature that warranted its inclusion here. Second, I have included a few cases that one of my associates investigated without me; these cases, also, had some unusual feature, perhaps one that I had found myself in other cases I had investigated.

As I also mentioned earlier, some of the birthmarks (and birth defects) bleed or ooze serum or pus when the subject is born. The lesions may remain open for some weeks after the baby's birth. Healing usually includes the formation of a scar. In a case of this group the photograph depicts not the unmodified birthmark, but rather the appearance of its residue when the photograph was taken.

On the Control of Reasoning Backward

The investigation of these cases focuses on the birthmarks and birth defects. My associates and I try to learn whether wounds or other marks on a deceased person correspond to the lesions on the subject. In doing this I cannot keep myself from conjecturing how the previous personality met his death. There is some risk here of corrupting the testimony of informants and the later reporting of what they have said. I have tried to keep myself aware of the temptations to conjecture, and the postmortem reports, where we have them, are a defense against errors that might arise without them.

Forensic pathologists can frequently tell in what order several different wounds were made on the body of a dead person and with what methods and weapons. In a few instances of this work I have tried to emulate them by deliberately reconstructing, from the evidence of birthmarks, how a deceased person was killed. I believe that my readers will have no difficulty in recognizing the places where I have done this.

Direct Quotations from Field Notes, Correspondence, and Other Documents

For the sole purpose of assisting the reader I have sometimes edited material that I have quoted from field notes, correspondence, and other documents, such as

postmortem reports. Most such editing has consisted of improvements in punctuation and phrasing; none of it has changed the meaning of the material cited.

Direct Quotations of Statements by the Subjects. One of the most important issues in solved cases is the question of whether the subject had information about the previous personality that he could not have obtained normally before the two families concerned in the case met. For evidence of this type the subject cannot be a witness once the families have met. Nevertheless, statements from the subject in such cases have some value. They may show the strength of his identification with the previous personality, which is itself an important datum of behavior. Occasionally also, the subject can help to correct mistakes that older informants may make as they try to remember what the subject said when younger. If the subject is still a young child, we may learn something from his manner of expressing himself. If he is an adult, we may learn about particular memories that have persisted when others have faded. For these various reasons I have included in some case reports quotations of statements about his memories that the subject had made directly to me and my associates. The reader should remember that I do not offer these as evidence of information paranormally acquired.

In unsolved cases the question of contamination of the subject's information from other sources does not arise, because no person corresponding to his statements has been found. I have therefore sometimes quoted direct statements from the subject in such cases.

The Different Strengths of the Several Types of Evidence in the Cases

I will not offer here a detailed defense of the authenticity[12] of these cases. Readers interested in discussions of the strengths and weaknesses of what investigators of paranormal phenomena call "spontaneous cases"—a category that subsumes the cases I report here—will find these in West (1948) and Stevenson (1968); I have also in previous publications discussed the different interpretations of the reincarnation-type cases—from fraud to reincarnation (Stevenson, 1966/1974b, 1980, 1987).

[12]I wish to emphasize here the important distinction between *authenticity* and *paranormality*. Authenticity refers to the reliability of the informants; it is a measure of the extent to which the case as reported corresponds to the case as it really happened (if we could know this). On the other hand, we will only regard a case as paranormal if it contains features inexplicable by the presently recognized sensory or physical processes. This means that a case can be fully authentic in that the informants have given an accurate report of events that have really happened and, at the same time, not include evidence of paranormal processes. As an illustrative example, we may take the case of a child who claims to remember the life of his own grandfather. His parents may accurately report everything he says and everything he says may be correct; and yet, the case may show no evidence of a paranormal process, because the child may have heard members of his family talking about the grandfather before he himself did so.

For readers coming to the study of these cases for the first time, I shall here add some remarks about particular strengths and weaknesses of the cases of which the reader should be aware at the outset. The different types of evidence have different values.

On the subject's side the photographs (and to a slightly lesser extent the occasional sketches) of the birthmarks and birth defects provide the most objective evidence. They are matched by the hospital and postmortem reports for many of the concerned previous personalities.

The accuracy of dates for births and deaths varies widely. For nearly every case of northwestern North America we have obtained copies of pertinent birth and death certificates, and I consider these reliable. We have also obtained many trustworthy birth and death certificates in Sri Lanka. (The death certificates state—sometimes briefly—the cause of death in medical terms and give the date of death.) For many cases elsewhere we have derived dates written or printed in hospital and postmortem records, diaries, horoscopes, and other family records. In the absence of such written or printed records, however, the dates usually become the least reliable items of evidence. Their unreliability, in general, increases with remoteness from the time of our investigations. For many of the cases involving deaths and births before 1930 I could only practice a kind of triangulation in which I would take the claimed ages of the informants at the time of an interview and the ages they said they were at the time of a birth or death in question. By this means I think I could usually come within 5 years of the real date and often within 1 or 2 years.

Other information in the case reports nearly all derives from the memories of the informants and is liable to the errors that memory has. Some students of eyewitness testimony would have us believe that it is hopelessly unreliable and deserves no credence at all. I do not agree with them; but I would not have written this book if I did not believe that cases depending mainly on informants' memories are weaker than those having the more objective data that the birthmarks and birth defects provide. However, the oral testimony of the cases in this work is essential to an understanding of most of them. To this end readers should remember that the testimony has usually come to me through two kinds of filters: those of the informants and those of the interpreters.

Except where mentioned, I have not used secondhand informants. At least I have not done so intentionally, although I recognize that informants sometimes mix secondhand information and hearsay with memories of what they themselves observed, and we may not always notice when they do this. Yet there has been a passage through the memory processes even of the firsthand informants, and some distortion may have occurred. My best defense against such distortion is the comparison of what one informant says with what other informants say and with what the same informant says at another time. In the longer case reports I have mentioned, so far as I detected them, all the major discrepancies in the testimony and many of the minor ones as well. For these cases I have tried always to include enough information to permit judgment about the authenticity of the case and

appraisal of its main features. In other cases a lack of living informants (through death or unavailability) or a deliberate focusing by me on the physical aspects of the case has resulted in a shortage of available oral testimony. I have not, however, included any case in the authenticity of which I do not believe.

The use of an interpreter (or translator for some written documents and tape recordings) introduces a further possible source of error. I have been blessed to have had the same interpreters working with me for many years, some of them for as long as a decade or even 2 decades. Their shortcomings, if they have any, cannot be attributed to inexperience.

Memories are more reliable for some observed events than for others. In my view they are least reliable for recognitions by the subject of persons, objects, and places known to the previous personality. These occur in a flash, once and for all; moreover, adults present often offer the child asked to make a recognition either a leading question or some subtler cue that could guide him. Experiments that have demonstrated the unreliability of eyewitness testimony are more relevant to an appraisal of recognitions in these cases than to other events the informants describe. However, two circumstances in which recognitions occur may provide items of greater evidential value. First, the subject may unexpectedly and spontaneously recognize some person known to the previous personality, perhaps when he happens to see that person accidentally on the street. Second, a small number of recognitions have occurred under controlled conditions in which the subject received no clues about the identity of a person he was asked to recognize if he could.

I rank higher in reliability the informants' memories for the subject's statements. Although the subjects make some statements only once, they sometimes repeat others often and tediously. A parent can hardly forget that his child has dinned into him or her at every mealtime how superior his previous parents were compared with those he now has.

The unusual behavior many subjects show seems the best remembered feature of the cases. This behavior often continues for years with many opportunities provided for noticing it. Here I am thinking of phobias, special interests, and play in which the subject appears to relive the occupational activity of the previous personality or his death. When parents assert, as they frequently do, that a child continued some unusual behavior for several years, we can hardly discredit their statements without supposing that they are inventing the whole case.

An Explanation of the Variations in the Amount and Quality of the Information Presented in the Case Reports

Readers will quickly find that the case reports of this work vary greatly in length and in the amount and quality of the data presented. Several circumstances have contributed to this. First, I investigated some of the cases many years ago and before I had improved my methods by an examination of their earlier shortcomings. Second, for many of the cases, especially some of those in Turkey and Burma, the subjects were already adults when we first reached their cases; this

often meant that informants for the cases had died or perhaps had forgotten what they had earlier observed. Third, in some of the cases more recently studied I have given my main attention to the physical aspects of the case, that is, the birthmark or congenital malformation in the subject and the wound or related mark on the presumed previous personality. Although I have always given enough attention to other aspects of these cases so that I could satisfy myself concerning their genuineness, I have not always attempted to marshal a platoon of accessory witnesses, as I did for many cases reported in my earlier volumes of reports. Fourth, in some cases of which I would have wished to make a thorough investigation the remoteness and comparative inaccessibility of the place where the case occurred prevented this. Reaching some villages entails traveling along nearly impassable roads or tracks in a Jeep or bullock-cart, or walking for several kilometers on foot, sometimes fording rivers; the difficulty of arriving at such places meant also that we had to leave them early in order to make the equally long and arduous journey back to our base. These geographical factors inevitably curtailed "office time" for many cases. The reader who appreciates this last aspect of the investigations may share my own satisfaction that, for certain cases, we are fortunate to have any information at all. Fifth, so as not to strain more than necessary the budget of my publisher or the patience of my readers, I have presented some cases, such as ones that seem to me of lesser importance or that I have not myself investigated, in summary form and have omitted from their reports some additional data that I have in my files. Finally, some cases have little to them except the subject's birthmark or birth defect. The subjects of a few cases made no statements suggesting imaged memories of a previous life, and others made only one statement or several statements.

All of the foregoing limitations are regrettable, but none seem to me fatal, or even grievous. I can assure readers that I have made every effort either to present data that I believe to be authentic or to say so expressly when I give information about which I have reservations or more positive information of inaccuracy.

The Plan of this Work

For the rest of this work I have adopted the following plan. As mentioned, its central theme is that images in one person's mind may produce corresponding localized changes in another person's physical body. In most of the work I am concerned with the possibility that the causative mental images are in the mind of a deceased person and the affected physical body is that of another, living person, namely an embryo or a fetus. Before coming to evidence of this kind of causation, however, I describe (in Chapter 2) some observations of the effects that a person's mental images may have on his or her own body. Then, as an extension of the foregoing topic, I review (in Chapter 3) some cases in which mental images in one person seem to have produced effects on another living person's body when the affected person had no normal knowledge of the first person's thoughts. I include in this chapter cases suggesting the influence of images in the mind of a pregnant woman on a developing embryo or fetus in her uterus.

Up to this point (the end of Part I) I describe observations concerning living persons only; but then I jump the chasm between life and death and present cases in which a deceased person appears to have influenced the body of another person not yet born.

Part II is devoted entirely to cases the subjects of which have birthmarks. In presenting their cases my plan is to proceed from the weakest cases toward the stronger ones. I begin, therefore, with reports (in Chapter 4) of cases the subjects of which have single birthmarks that the subjects or other informants said correspond with wounds in the related previous personalities; but in these cases we have not obtained any verifications showing that the presumed previous personalities did in fact have such wounds. These cases will therefore mainly serve to introduce the question of why a particular person is born with a particular birthmark.

Next I present (in Chapter 5) a sample group of cases in which we *have* obtained verifications of corresponding wounds on the related previous personalities, these verifications deriving from the statements of informants drawing on their memories.

As I have explained in my earlier volumes of case reports, investigators nearly always reach the sites of cases after the two families concerned have met, at which time, or later, members of the families may mingle their memories; some of the informants may then attribute to the subject more accurate statements about the presumed previous personality than he had actually made before the families met. In cases with birthmarks, the informants may have a similar tendency to harmonize statements about the location of wounds on the presumed previous personality with the location of visible birthmarks on the subject. We have eliminated this possibility in many cases by obtaining contemporary medical documents, usually hospital records or autopsy reports, that verify the location and appearance of the pertinent wounds on the concerned previous personalities. Such records have nearly always corroborated the oral testimony of our informants about the location of these wounds. In Chapter 6 I present a selection of cases having such written medical documentation.

Up to Chapter 6, the subjects of the cases described have all had birthmarks that corresponded to fatal wounds on the body of the person whose life they remembered. In Chapter 7 I present some cases whose subjects had birthmarks related to surgical wounds and internal diseases; and in Chapter 8 I present cases with birthmarks related to a variety of other marks, such as the small wounds made for earrings.

In Chapter 9 I change my approach to the cases. Instead of considering them mainly with regard to the wounds or marks on the previous personality, I consider a particular group of birthmarks—nevi—in relation to the various wounds and marks to which they may correspond.

In Chapter 10 I describe cases in which someone predicted the finding at a particular site of a subject's body of a birthmark that had not yet been noticed by the predictor. In other cases of this chapter a birthmark was predicted for an as yet unborn baby. Such cases frequently include the feature that someone marked the

dead (or perhaps dying) body of the previous personality with the expectation of producing a birthmark on a baby who would be the reincarnation of the marked person. We call the resulting marks "experimental birthmarks."

In Chapter 11 I consider movement and fading of some birthmarks during the growth of the subject.

In Chapter 12 I examine the correspondence in details between the wounds or other marks on the previous personality and the features of the subject's birthmark or birthmarks.

In Chapter 13 I present some cases in which discrepancies occurred between birthmarks and wounds on the previous personality.

In Chapter 14 I examine some features and circumstances of the cases that are, or are not, correlated with the occurrence of birthmarks.

In Chapter 15 I appraise the evidence and review the important alternative explanations for it.

Part III is devoted to birth defects. Chapter 16 introduces this topic and reviews the presently recognized causes of birth defects. For the first two chapters of case reports (Chapters 17 and 18) I have adopted an anatomical classification and have placed in separate chapters birth defects of the extremities and those of the head and neck. This is not an entirely satisfactory division, and in Chapter 19 I describe some cases that proved refractory to it because the subjects had birth defects and sometimes also birthmarks in two or more regions of the body. In Chapter 20 I describe some cases in which birth defects correspond to postmortem wounds on the previous personality. These cases resemble, in principle, the cases of experimental birthmarks described in Chapter 10, except that here we are concerned with birth defects, not birthmarks.

Part IV (Chapter 21) describes some cases in which internal diseases appear to derive from previous lives. My case material for this section is meager, and I discuss in this chapter why the skin seems more likely than any other organ to be the site of abnormalities related to previous lives.

In Part V (Chapter 22) I present some cases in which the subject had a disorder of pigmentation seemingly related to a previous life.

This book would be incomplete without reference to some other physical features that informants sometimes say derive from previous lives. In Part VI, therefore, I present and discuss (in Chapter 23) abnormalities of physique, posture, and gait and (in Chapter 24) some cases suggesting that previous lives may influence the uniqueness of human faces.

Our collection of cases now includes nearly 40 pairs of twins in which one or both of a twin pair has claimed to remember a previous life. Some of the twins are dizygotic, others monozygotic; some have birthmarks or birth defects, others do not. The importance of twin studies in relation to reincarnation research justifies my devoting an entire section—Part VII (Chapter 25)—to twins.

It is impossible to believe, as I do, that reincarnation is the best explanation for at least some of the cases here described without conjecturing the processes by which wounds and marks on one physical body may influence the form of

another, later-born one. I therefore feel warranted in offering some conjectures on this subject in the chapter of General Discussion in Part VIII (Chapter 26).

The Divisions of the Work. The size of this work has required its division into two volumes.

In Volume 1 I have included two chapters on cases illustrating correspondences between mental images and physical lesions, either on the body of the person having the relevant mental image or on the body of another person. The remainder of this volume is devoted to the cases of subjects having birthmarks corresponding to wounds or other marks on a deceased person. I have placed at the end of Volume 1 the references for it and also two Appendices (A and B) on relevant aspects of the modern histories of Turkey and Burma.

Volume 2 contains case reports of subjects having birth defects and some other disorders seemingly derived from previous lives. I have placed at the end of this Volume: the references for it, Appendix C, Appendix D, and the Indexes to the entire work.

Appendix C lists all the cases described in this work that report maternal impressions or that are suggestive of reincarnation. The cases appear in the order of their presentation. Brief summaries of the important features of each case are provided.

Appendix D lists all the cases suggestive of reincarnation that are either reported in this work or mentioned in it. For cases that are reported in this work, the list provides the chapter (or chapters) in which the case is reported or mentioned. For cases only mentioned in this work, but not fully reported, a reference to a published detailed report is given if such exists. All the cases in this list are ordered by the subjects' *first* names (without honorifics). This Appendix thus serves as an index to cases in this work and elsewhere.

Because Appendices C and D provide indexes to the subjects of cases suggestive of reincarnation or a maternal impression, the Index of Names does not include these. The Index of Names includes authors who are mentioned or whose work is quoted, as well as notable personalities such as Jesus or the Buddha, whose lives or thoughts are referred to somewhat extensively. It does not include the names of authors of quoted case reports or authors who are simply cited as references; their names will be found in one or the other of the two reference lists.

The Index of Cases provides a comprehensive list of cases discussed or cited in this work. The other index at the end of Volume 2 is an Index of Subjects (Topics).

A Note on Notes

I have already mentioned—and indeed emphasized—the features that recur often in the cases of children who remember previous lives. In footnotes for case reports in the first parts of this work I have drawn attention to other cases having a particular feature of a case reported. Such features include: vengefulness on the part of the subject, phobias apparently related to the previous life, cravings on the part of the subject that corresponded to habituations or addictions in the concerned

previous personality, precocity and "adult behavior" on the part of the subject, and birthmarks that bled or suppurated for days or longer after the subject's birth.

Thinking that my readers may, after a time, have had enough reminders of such similarities between the cases, I have diminished and even omitted such cross-referencing footnotes in the later chapters of the work. Readers wishing to study cases having a particular feature may consult the Index of Subjects (Topics).

2

Bodily Changes Corresponding to Mental Images in the Person Affected

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter and the following one I shall describe some of the effects that the thoughts of living persons may have on bodily functions. I shall first consider (in this chapter) some ways in which a person's thoughts can affect his or her own body. In the next chapter I shall review evidence suggesting that images in one person's mind may produce corresponding changes in another person's body. In both chapters I shall have little to say about processes, about which our scant knowledge warrants few conjectures. My aim is at presenting evidence of close correspondences between mental images and localized bodily changes.

A person's thoughts can affect his or her body in several ways. There can be a *general* effect involving many different bodily organs, such as occurs in states of fear, anger, and joy. The physiological processes that mediate these general effects have been extensively investigated since the beginning of this century (Cannon, 1915/1963). However, thoughts may also have *local* effects on the body, sometimes in a small area only. This book is mainly about the more localized bodily effects of mental imagery. However, a reader should remember how profound and widespread the general effects of strong emotions accompanying particular thoughts may be. Also, the events that precede and seem to cause many of the

localized effects that I shall describe are associated with strong emotions and their general bodily effects. (I am alluding here to violent death, a topic that will recur frequently throughout this book.)

STIGMATA

The word *stigma* (plural: *stigmata*) comes from the Greek for a mark made with a pointed instrument or a branding tool. Because such marks were made on slaves, they were considered signs of shame or infamy. Klauder (1938) suggested that the word *stigma* became associated with the wounds of Jesus when he was crucified, because under Roman law at that time Roman citizens were executed with a sword, whereas persons who were not citizens were crucified. In temporal terms Jesus' execution was disgraceful (a point emphasized by his being crucified between two common thieves), and so his wounds were called stigmata. Persons who later developed wounds on their bodies corresponding in location and appearance to those of Jesus were said to have received the stigmata. St. Francis of Assisi is the best known stigmatic, and he was possibly the first. (If he had predecessors, they may have been bogus [Thurston, 1952]; but they might also simply have been unrecorded.) Since the time of St. Francis of Assisi at least 350 stigmatics have been reported (Imbert-Gourbeyre, 1873/1894; Jacobi, 1923), although they are not all of equal authenticity and interest.

I shall not attempt to survey the vast literature on stigmatism; much of it is not pertinent to the present work. Apart from this, there exist excellent summaries of stigmatism by two physicians (Biot, 1955/1962; Jacobi, 1923) and a historian of mysticism (Thurston, 1952). Since their reviews were published, fewer than a dozen cases have been observed and reported with sufficient care to warrant mention; I shall refer later to several of these. Writers on stigmata have tended to favor one or the other of two interpretations of them. Some have emphasized their religious significance by considering—and even affirming—that true stigmata result from some divine intervention. Other observers have reduced their significance by subsuming them under the heading of hysteria. It is, however, possible to appraise stigmata without using either the vocabulary of hagiology or that of psychopathology, and I shall try to do this. The purpose of these introductory chapters requires me to concentrate attention on evidence that stigmata occur through a psychosomatic process and that variations in them derive from the different mental images of the crucifixion that mystics have had. Of nearly all stigmatists a variety of other unusual phenomena have been reported. These include visions, bilocations, healing powers, extrasensory perception, the ability to live normally without food and water, and postmortem incorruptibility of the physical body. (Not all these are reported of all stigmatists.) We must include reports of such phenomena in any complete appraisal of the persons concerned, but I believe we can evaluate the circumstances of stigmata separately. I shall therefore say almost nothing about these other associated phenomena.

The Authenticity of Stigmata

Having mentioned that some stigmata may have been artifactual, I should briefly discuss the evidence for the authenticity of the more important recorded cases. Evidence of this in the case of St. Francis of Assisi himself may seem less satisfactory than that in many later cases, because no written record of his stigmata was made until after his death, and later authors have possibly been influenced by the first reporter, who was Thomas of Celano (Krumbhaar, 1927). Nevertheless, the early chroniclers of St. Francis' life recorded the testimony of witnesses still living who had observed the saint's stigmata during his life or just after his death. We can read descriptions of St. Francis' stigmata in the publications of Fortini (1959), Howell (1908), Krumbhaar (1927), Okey (1910), and Sabatier (1894/1931).

St. Francis initiated what Thurston (1952) called a "crucifixion complex." Of this Thurston wrote that when contemplatives accepted the idea that it was possible to conform physically to Jesus' sufferings by having his wounds, the idea spread to many persons. "It became in fact a pious obsession; so much so that in a few exceptionally sensitive individuals the idea conceived in the mind was realised in the flesh" (Thurston, 1952, p. 122). For most of the more than 350 stigmatics of whom we have some record we have inadequate accounts; but Thurston estimated that we have sufficient information concerning 50 cases for judgment about their authenticity.

Fraudulent cases of stigmatism have been exposed from time to time (Jacobi, 1923; Thurston, 1952). In a case mentioned by Thurston (1952), that of Maria de la Visitación, the purported stigmatist was observed applying paint to simulate wounds. The impostors did not necessarily act from venal motives in order to attract attention or money; some in an excess of religious zeal may have wished to share the wounds of Jesus and scarified (with sharp instruments or diluted acids) their own skin at the sites of his wounds. Some of them may have done this in conditions to which we might apply the word *trance*. After we set all such cases aside, however, there remain others in which the testimony shows beyond doubt that the pertinent lesions were not created artifactually.

The observation and recording of stigmata have, in general, been more precise during the past two centuries than they were earlier. I have studied reports of 10 cases in which physicians examined and described the appearances of stigmatic lesions. These include the cases of Anna K. Emmerich (Druffel, 1814; Wesener, 1925), Natuzza Evolo (Marinelli, 1993), and Louise Lateau (Warlomont, 1875). Physicians, however, are far from infallible in such matters. Physicians who examined the stigmata of Padre Pio (Festa, 1949) and Therese Neumann (Ewald, 1927; Klauder, 1938) considered them authentic, although not necessarily miraculous; and yet evidence strongly suggests that they were not. The case of Therese Neumann has particularly evoked earnest debate between hagiographers like Gerlich (1929) and Steiner (1985), on the one side, and skeptics like Graef (1951) and Thurston (1952), on the other. The last two authors emphasized the absence in Therese Neumann of the characteristics of personality repeatedly found in stigmatics universally judged to have been saintly. Although Ewald (1927) and Poray Madeyski (1940) considered Therese

Neumann's stigmata to be authentic, albeit of psychosomatic origin, Hanauer (1967, 1972, 1989) marshalled evidence supporting his view that for her stigmata "some artifactual supplement is minimally probable" (Hanauer, 1967, p. 23; my translation). The polemicists concerned with the case of Therese Neumann did not divide along religious lines; Thurston, Graef, and Hanauer were all Roman Catholics.

Hanauer (1972) has also cited evidence that Padre Pio, whose sanctity is far better attested than that claimed for Therese Neumann, used chemical irritants to produce his stigmata.

In several other cases, however, competent observers have witnessed bleeding as it was occurring (Early and Lifschutz, 1974; Harrison, 1981; Lechler, 1933; Marinelli, 1993). In addition, bleeding from the area of the eyes was observed in Mrs. H., the patient studied by Whitlock and Hynes (1978), and in Delfina, the young girl observed by Caamaño (1984).

Comment. The allegations of artifactual elements in the stigmata of Therese Neumann and Padre Pio have not gone uncontested (Malatesta, 1993; Steiner, 1985). I wish to add here, however, that I find nothing inconsistent in believing that their stigmata were originally psychosomatic in origin and also may have received some chemical supplement, perhaps applied in an endeavor to prevent infection of the wounds.

Stigmata and Sanctity

Perhaps more than any other person St. Francis of Assisi lived the kind of life that Jesus taught us we all should live. He identified himself so fully with Jesus that he wished, particularly in the last years of his life, to experience what Jesus had suffered on the cross. Immediately before his stigmata developed he had a vision of a seraph who showed him the image of a man crucified; St. Francis interpreted this to mean that Jesus himself had appeared to him in the guise of the seraph (Okey, 1910). Some other early stigmatists, perhaps most notably St. Catherine of Siena (Jorgensen, 1938; Raymond, 1477/1980), had somewhat similar visions before developing their wounds. The occurrence of the wounds without apparent normal cause, combined with the sanctity of the early stigmatists, understandably gave rise to a belief in their miraculous nature. In these cases this would mean that the stigmata occurred as an expression of divine grace accorded to the recipient. From this belief it was easy to suppose that a person who developed stigmata must necessarily be a saint.

I cannot say when this last idea was first exposed as wrong. However, the reports of some of the 19th-century stigmatists led gradually to awareness that some stigmatists, although pious, were far from saintly, to judge by their conduct. The case of Domenica Lazzari (Allies, 1849) may have been one of the first to modify opinion in this matter. In the last half of the 19th century several observers (Beaunis, 1886; Biggs, 1887-88; Bourneville, 1875; Hartmann, 1868/1874;

Maury, 1860) suggested that stigmatism involved autosuggestion, an interpretation that both Jacobi (1923) and Thurston (1952) later endorsed.[1]

Cases of the 20th century have added further evidence showing that stigmata may develop in persons whose conduct falls short of saintliness. Janet's patient Madeleine, who bore stigmata, was similarly obsessed, one might say, with the death of Jesus; she was not a saint, but showed clear signs of psychopathology (Janet, 1926). So did the almost contemporaneous stigmatist "Georges Marasco" (Thurston, 1924, 1925, 1955). Lechler's subject, Elisabeth K. (mentioned further below), although pious, was far from being either a contemplative or a saint (Lechler, 1933). To these examples of stigmata without saintliness we can add several more recent cases, including two reported in German newspapers (Graef, 1951; Thurston, 1955) and those reported by Early and Lifschutz (1974), Harrison (1981), and Whitlock and Hynes (1978). This is not to deny that a saintly character may have some indirect connection with stigmata, and the modern cases of Dorothy Kerin (Arnold, 1965), Mère Yvonne-Aimée (Laurentin, 1985), Natuzza Evolo (Marinelli, 1993), and Marthe Robin (Antier, 1991) show that stigmata may still also occur in persons who are saintly. However, if we wish to find a satisfying explanation for stigmata, as opposed to being content with calling them hysterical or miraculous, we must look for some common factor underlying the mental processes in stigmatists who are saints and those who are not. Before suggesting what this factor may be, I shall briefly describe some of the variations that have occurred in the appearance and location of stigmata.

First, I shall digress to mention that although stigmata have occurred most often among Roman Catholics, they are not restricted to them. Elisabeth K., studied by Lechler (1933), Ethel Chapman (Harrison, 1981), Dorothy Kerin (Arnold, 1965), and the girl subject studied by Early and Lifschutz (1974) in California were all Protestants, as were two men of Hamburg, Germany, who developed stigmata (Graef, 1951; Thurston, 1955). Jacobi (1923) stated that some devout Moslems have developed stigmata through dwelling on the wounds that Mohammed received in battle; but he gave no source for this statement. Other authors have also referred to stigmata among Moslems, but none known to me has given a reference to a firsthand witness.

Variations in the Appearance and Location of Stigmata

Wide variations occur in the number and bodily distribution of stigmata. St. Francis of Assisi's body showed stigmata of the hands and feet that supposedly corresponded to the nails driven through the limbs of Jesus when he

[1]As early as the 16th century, Agrippa had suggested that stigmata might derive from thoughts in the minds of the affected persons (Agrippa, 1531-33/1971).

St. Francis de Sales (1616/1925) believed that the imagination begins the process of stigmatization. However, he also believed that some additional miraculous intervention is needed before stigmatic wounds open externally.

was crucified.[2] In addition, he had a lesion on his right chest that was said to correspond to the spear wound made in Jesus' body by a Roman soldier. Some later stigmatists have shown these wounds and also additional ones, the most frequent being lesions of the top of the head, particularly the forehead (corresponding to the crown of thorns pressed onto Jesus' head), of the shoulder (corresponding to the burden and pain he must have experienced when carrying the cross to Calvary), and of the back (corresponding to the scourging of Jesus with whips).

Particularly relevant to the present work are three reported instances in which stigmatists developed changes in the tissues of the wrists that supposedly corresponded to the marks of the rope with which Jesus was bound when he was first arrested. The first case was that of Marguerite du Saint-Sacrement, a 17th-century ecstatic who relived the Passion of Jesus, developing on her hands swellings that closely resembled—so witnesses said—the marks that ropes binding the wrists would make. A nearly contemporary account of this feature stated:

> ...she became as if dead from prostration. Her hands seemed attached to each other, as if they had been tied with ropes, and the marks these made were so deeply impressed that black swellings were seen at their edges, showing the places where the ropes had seemed to be sunk into the flesh. (Amelotte, 1654, p. 224; my translation)

[2]It has been pointed out in medical publications that if in crucifixion nails were driven through the palms of the hands (between the metacarpal bones), the soft distal tissues of the hand could not support the weight of the body. The nails would tear through the palms, and the upper body, detached from the nails, would collapse downward (Barbet, 1950/1953; DePasquale and Burch, 1963). Experiments with cadavers (Villandre, cited by Jürgensen, 1939) and amputated arms (Barbet, 1950/1953) have supported this conclusion. Transfixion through the palms might have been feasible if the buttocks had received some support from a small attachment (sedile) to the stipes of the cross. Zugibe (1988) also conducted experiments (some with living persons) and argued persuasively that suspension would have been feasible with nails driven through the proximal part of the palm and penetrating one of the junctions between the carpal and metacarpal bones. He did not think special support of the feet or buttocks necessary. Some archeological evidence indicates that transfixion was through the wrists at least sometimes (Haas, 1970).

The improbability of transfixion through the palms (metacarpal spaces) accords with the main point I wish to make here, which is that stigmata correspond to the mental image the stigmatist has of the crucifixion, not necessarily to the physical experience of Jesus.

The historicity of Jesus having been *nailed* to the cross, instead of being merely bound to it with thongs, has also been questioned; if no nails were used in his crucifixion, this fact would also favor an interpretation of stigmata as due to images in the mind of the stigmatist.

Assertions about the cause of Jesus' death in medical terms (Edwards, Gabel, and Hosmer, 1986) have not gone unchallenged (Correspondence, 1986). Wiser medical authors writing about this subject admit the uncertainty of their conjectures (Tenney, 1964). Fortunately, their correctness or incorrectness is not germane to the present topic.

Father Crivelli, the confessor of St. Veronica Giuliani (1660-1727), observed her during one of her seeming enactments of the sufferings of Jesus after his arrest. Salvatori (1838/1874) wrote:

> ...she had been enduring our Lord's agony in the garden, His seizure, His bonds, besides all the blows and insults which He underwent in being led before the tribunals of Herod and Pilate. She had just got to the point in the Divine Passion [when Father Crivelli was called to observe Veronica in the middle of the night]. Father Crivelli procured a light and pointed out to his companion [another priest] the deep marks which had been impressed on both her wrists, as though by cords... (p. 169)

We owe the third report of stigmatalike rope marks to Imbert-Gourbeyre (1873/1894), who had opportunities to observe the 19th-century French stigmatist, Marie-Julie Jahenny, over a period of 20 years. He stated that she developed the five main stigmata in 1873 and then successively some of the subsidiary ones, such as that of the crown of thorns. Then occurred "on January 12, 1874 the appearance of the stigmata on the wrists, corresponding to the ropes which had bound the Lord's hands" (Vol. 1, p. 27; my translation).

I ask my readers to remember these cases of ropelike marks in stigmatists when they read descriptions later in this work of ropelike marks on a psychiatric patient who relived the experience of being bound with ropes and on several of the children who remembered the lives of deceased persons who had been bound with ropes.

Some stigmatists, including Elisabeth K. (Lechler, 1933), Mrs. H. (Whitlock and Hynes, 1978), and Delfina (Caamaño, 1984), have bled from the eyes or the eyelids. In contrast to the stigmatists who showed a plenitude of lesions far exceeding the five reported for St. Francis of Assisi, Mrs. H. bled *only* from the area around her eyelids.

The five principal stigmata (of the hands, feet, and chest) have also varied widely in appearance. Some stigmatists have bled from the presumed sites of Jesus' principal wounds without having any visible local lesions whatever. Blood seemed simply to ooze through the skin. Gemma Galgani (Germano, 1913), Marthe Robin (Antier, 1991), and the subject studied by Early and Lifschutz (1974) belonged to this group. More commonly, however, observers have noted an area of abnormal tissue or substance—difficult to characterize—at the site of the bleeding. The stigmata on the limbs were usually more or less circular and about 5 to 15 millimeters in diameter. The wounds on the chest showed a greater variety of appearances, and I shall mention some of these later.

Observers sometimes described the local appearance of a stigma as that of a scab, scar, or congealed blood lying on top of the skin; but some have described sunken areas. They have also remarked that the area of skin surrounding the lesion showed no sign of inflammation (a feature to be expected in cases of artifactual wounding). Thurston (1952) asserted that *no* lesion of a stigmatist had

ever suppurated.[3] I think that he correctly drew attention to the lack of reports of inflammation, which we should certainly expect in tissues deprived of covering skin for long periods of time, such as has occurred with many stigmatists.

In many stigmatists bleeding from the wounds has occurred in cycles. Fridays in general and Good Friday in particular have been days when bleeding would occur or commence. In stigmatists who had a weekly cycle, the bleeding might occur only on a Friday or it might begin on a Friday and continue until the following week. Louise Lateau bled only on Fridays (Molloy, 1873). Domenica Lazzari was another stigmatist who showed cyclical bleeding, her wounds remaining visible between the bleedings (Allies, 1849). In contrast, those of Gemma Galgani (Germano, 1913), would heal up and disappear between bleedings, or she would bleed without visible wounds under the blood, as did Marthe Robin (Antier, 1991) and the subject reported by Early and Lifschutz (1974).

To account for the variations in the stigmata we need to invoke several factors. Prominent among these are the images of the crucifixion that a subject holds in his or her mind, and I shall devote the next section to this topic.

The Influence on Stigmata of Mental Representations of Jesus' Wounds

Jacobi (1923) drew attention to the occurrence of the chest wounds on different sides of the body in different stigmatists.[4] Later writers have also commented on the right/left variations in the chest stigmata (Jürgensen, 1939; Klauder, 1938; Thurston, 1952; Whitlock and Hynes, 1978). In the cases of St. Francis of Assisi, Anna K. Emmerich, and the subject studied by Early and Lifschutz, the lesion (or in the last case, the bleeding) was on the right side of the chest. In contrast, it was on the left side in the cases of Mother Beatrice, St. Catherine of Siena, Louise Lateau, Domenica Lazzari, and Marthe Robin.

Jürgensen (1939) related these variations in the side of the chest lesion to differences in the pictorial representations of Jesus' crucifixion. Of the four Gospels, only that of St. John mentions a wound on the side of Jesus' body. Verse 34 of Chapter 19 states: "...one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water." As the side was not specified artists were free to select either side. Up to the 17th century they tended to represent the wound on the right side. The developing knowledge of anatomy and the discovery of the circulation of the blood (early in that century) then influenced artists to locate the wound over the heart, and therefore on the left

[3]The only possible exception known to me might be that of the stigmata of Anna K. Emmerich. Wesener (1925, p. 12) reported finding "a trace of pus" on a bandage that had covered the wound on the back of the right hand and "more pus" in the wound of the right foot. However, Druffel (1814), after examining the wounds 3 days later, concluded that other observers had mistaken some coagulated lymph for pus.

[4]Jacobi (1923) referred to an earlier article in *Revue des deux mondes* from which he appears to have obtained some of his information about the sides of the chest wounds. He did not give the author's name, the title of the article, or other bibliographical details about it, and I have not studied it.

side of the body.[5] The artists' changed representations of the crucifixion may have influenced stigmatics so that they developed wounds on the left side of the chest. St. Catherine of Siena (in the 14th century), however, had a wound on the left side before the shift in artists' representations of Jesus' crucifixion.

Ribet (1895) and later Simon (1933) offered a more comprehensive explanation of the relationship between what we might call stimulating images and the sites of stigmata. The stigmatics have identified with Jesus in different ways. Some have seen themselves as, so to speak, within his body, and they have developed stigmata on the same side of the body as that of their familiar image of Jesus. Others, however, have felt themselves pierced somehow—the descriptive language varies—by emanations from the image of Jesus (such as a statue or statuette) that they had before them or saw in visions. These emanations would come directly from the image or the vision of Jesus to the body of the devotee, and the wound on the chest would thus be on the side opposite to that represented in the image or vision. St. Catherine of Siena described how she had a vision of Jesus from whom she saw "springing from the marks of his most sacred wounds, five blood-red rays coming down upon me, directed towards my hands and feet and heart." Raymond of Capua, from whom we have this account, asked her: "Did not one of these rays come upon your right side?" Catherine replied: "No, but one came upon my left side, straight down on to my heart" (Raymond, 1477/1980, p. 186). St. Veronica Giuliani had a similar vision of Jesus with rays of light extending from his wounds to sites on her body where she developed stigmata (Laignel-Lavastine and Abadie, 1933; Salvatori, 1838/1874). Similarly, Gemma Galgani saw (in a vision) flames emanating from the wounds of Jesus and reaching the sites of her stigmata (Germano, 1913).

The stigmata on the chest did not differ only in location; wide variations occurred also in the shape of the wounds. Thurston (1952) stated: "Sometimes we have a round puncture, sometimes a straight cut, sometimes a crescent-shaped wound" (p. 123).

All the stigmatists that I have so far mentioned had the wounds of the hands in the palms and the wounds of the feet in the instep. Figures 2-1, 2-2, 2-3, and 2-4, although taken from a case of hypnotically induced stigmata, show these typical locations on the hands and feet. Stigmata of the hands and feet have, however, occurred in different locations in another modern stigmatic, Natuzza Evolo of Paravati, Calabria, Italy. She was born in 1924 and developed stigmata when she was about 10 years old. In her case, the wounds of her hands were at the wrist and the wounds of the feet were above the ankles. Photographs published by Marinelli (1993) clearly show the wounds in these locations. They show two wounds of the legs well above each ankle. The wounds of Natuzza Evolo's wrists evolved from

[5]In three of Rubens' works depicting the crucifixion and the dead Jesus the wound of the chest is on the left side. However, Rubens showed the wound on the right side in at least 25 other paintings of the crucifixion or the dead Jesus. Rembrandt chose the left side in several of his depictions of the same scenes, and Gurewich (1957) suggested that Harvey's discovery of the circulation of the blood (published in 1628) may have influenced Rembrandt, who had a keen interest in anatomy.

simple holes; that on her left wrist later had the distinct form of a cross. Observers believed that they could also discern the Greek letters alpha and omega in the wounds of the wrists, but I could not form a judgment about this from the photographs that Marinelli published. It is certain, however, that the wounds on Natuzza Evolo were more complicated than the simple marks or depressions developed by other stigmatists.

Students of this subject have sometimes remarked on correspondences between the forms of stigmata and the images before which the stigmatists prayed. For example, Germano (1913) quoted Signora Cecilia Giannini, who became Gemma Galgani's adopted mother, as saying the following:

> If you wish to form some idea of it [the wounds of scourgings that Gemma developed], recall to mind the large Crucifix that we have in the house before which Gemma was in the habit of praying; she [that is, Gemma's body with its wounds] was like that. The same livid marks, the same torn open gashes in the skin and flesh *in the same parts of the body*, equally long and equally horrifying to behold. Blood came from her wounds in great abundance... (p. 69; my italics)

Thurston (1922) commented on the foregoing passage:

> This evidence is the more valuable because it comes from a witness who was persuaded that the whole phenomenon was supernatural, and who never suspected that she was supplying materials for quite another interpretation. (p. 185)

Wegener (1902/1974) and Hanauer (1979) drew attention to the resemblance between the Y-shaped cross that appeared on the breast of Anna K. Emmerich and a crucifix of the same shape in the church at Coesfeld, where she was baptized. She spent much of her early life in Coesfeld. This unusually shaped wooden crucifixion statue sometimes figures in processions at Coesfeld. Seller (1974) published photographs of it and also a photograph of an impression made on cloth with the blood of the Y-shaped cross on Anna K. Emmerich's breast. The form of the stigma thus represented resembles that of the cross in the crucifixion statue.[6]

[6]The impression made of blood on cloth placed over the wound shows a double Y-shaped cross. The general form of the crosses corresponds closely to that of the Coesfeld crucifixion statue. However, the lines in the blood impression that represent Jesus' outstretched arms seem preternaturally straight and have raised a suspicion in my mind that someone may have touched up the impression. On the other hand, a contemporary sketch of the Y-shaped crosses on Anna K. Emmerich's chest has the same general form as both the impression on cloth and the statue. This sketch was made by one of the official investigators of the stigmata and published by Schmöger (1867, Vol. 1, p. 272). Also, Wegener (1902/1974) reasonably suggested that the straight, horizontal line on the cloth impression might derive from a fusion in Anna K. Emmerich's mind of the Y-shaped Coesfeld cross and the standard Latin cross. Whether this is a correct explanation or not, my study of the evidence has convinced me that Anna K. Emmerich did have on her chest an abnormal double Y-shaped cross that corresponded in form to the shape of the Coesfeld crucifixion statue with which she was familiar from childhood on.

Further evidence of the influence of mental imagery on the occurrence and form of stigmata comes from rare cases in which the stigmata have responded to suggestions that they come or go, and I shall describe some examples of this in the next section.

The Influence of Suggestions on the Occurrence of Stigmata

Up to this point I have described evidence indicating that stigmatics develop their wounds according to the thoughts they have about Jesus' crucifixion. We can call this process a type of autosuggestion. (I shall not offer a definition of the word *suggestion* here, but will return to the topic later.) In the present section I shall describe the influence that other persons may have on the occurrence of stigmata; the examples I give will be of heterosuggestions.

The stigmatic wound on the chest of St. Veronica Giuliani (according to her own account, cited by Thurston, [1952]) opened and closed periodically. Sometimes she herself would predict when the wound would close again, and it would close at that time. However, on at least three occasions St. Veronica's wounds opened and closed at the suggestions of priests to whom she was subordinate (Laignel-Lavastine and Abadie, 1933; Salvatori, 1838/1874).

Matko (1933) published reports of two 19th-century peasant girls of Slovenia who developed stigmata. The pastor of one of them urged her to pray for the disappearance of the stigmata; she did this, the bleeding ceased, and the stigmata disappeared. (This might be considered an instance of autosuggestion, but I have counted it as a heterosuggestion because the pastor instigated the prayers and suggested that they could heal the stigmata.)

The most extensive instances of suggested stigmata occurred in Elisabeth K., the German (Lutheran) girl whom Lechler (1933) studied. I shall describe this case in detail because Lechler's report is not widely available—it has never been published in English—and because it illustrates excellently the experimental induction by suggestion of localized physical changes.

Elisabeth K.—Lechler did not give her last name—was born in 1902. During her youth and early adulthood, she received extensive treatment for a wide variety of psychiatric ailments. These included visceral disorders, such as headaches, vomiting, and diplopia, as well as a prolonged episode of hemiplegia and hemianesthesia from which she later recovered. She spent long periods in bed and seems to have been almost continuously under treatment of one kind or another. The hemiplegia yielded to suggestion with hypnosis, but an episode of anxiety and depression followed. During Elisabeth's late 20s, she came under the care of Lechler, who in 1929 took her into his household as a servant. For this he seems to have had the double motive of trying to help Elisabeth and of having an opportunity to observe her closely. With further hypnotic sessions he improved her condition.

Elisabeth was an unusually sensitive woman, easily affected by the sufferings of other persons. She readily identified with them and assumed their physical

disabilities.[7] If she heard or read about an illness in someone, she would develop its symptoms and signs or close resemblances of these. For example, if she saw someone with a tremor or a limp, she would begin to tremble or limp herself. Once she heard about someone who had tendinitis; she then developed pain, redness, and swelling in her own arm and was actually treated for tendinitis with a plaster cast. Sometimes her memories of other persons' illnesses would evoke their symptoms. These symptoms included the imitation of a strangulated hernia, for which she was almost operated on, and (real) hemoptysis.

Lechler came to understand the origin of Elisabeth's various symptoms through questioning her under hypnosis. He also learned to appreciate her extraordinary capacity to translate images into a physical experience for herself. Here I shall quote (in my translation) a passage from Lechler's monograph in which he described the events just before he induced the development of stigmata in Elisabeth:

> When she heard about some exciting event or some accident, she seemed actually to see the affected person in front of her. Whenever she read in the Bible stories about the healing of the lame, she had the feeling that she herself was lame and numb in her legs. She attended a lecture (illustrated with lantern slides) about the suffering and death of Jesus; as she looked at the picture of the Savior on the cross, she felt severe pain in her hands and feet at the places where nails had been driven into Jesus. (p. 11)

This last episode occurred on Good Friday of 1932. When Elisabeth narrated to Lechler the symptoms she had experienced as she watched the illustration of the crucifixion, he decided to see whether he could induce a further development of stigmata with hypnosis. Accordingly, he hypnotized her and gave her the suggestion that during her sleep at night she would think that nails were driven through her hands and feet. Lechler's account then continues:

> Next morning, very early, she showed me with alarm her hands and feet. The sites I had indicated during the hypnosis all had areas (about the size of a small coin) that were red and swollen with the skin somewhat opened up and showing moisture. Elisabeth calmed down when I explained to her the cause [his hypnotic suggestions] of the wounds. Then with her consent I gave her, in a waking condition, the further suggestion that the wounds would become deeper and also that she would weep bloody tears. (p. 11)

After these suggestions the wounds of the feet and the hands became redder and more swollen; the skin seemed absent from the affected areas; and the under-

[7]Therese Neumann sometimes developed the symptoms of other persons' physical illnesses (Ewald, 1927; Spiegl, 1963), and so did Anna K. Emmerich (Hanauer, 1979). However, this trait does not seem to have occurred widely among other stigmatics.

lying tissues were exposed and bloody. The lesions caused Elisabeth so much pain that she could not move about readily. Under pressure of her work she forgot to think about having bloody tears. Lechler then added further suggestions about this symptom, and within 2 hours Elisabeth showed him bloody tears streaming from her eyes. (Lechler published photographs of the stigmata on the dorsal and palmar sides of Elisabeth's hands [the former shown in Figure 2-1] and feet [Figure 2-2] and also of her face with bloody tears.) His account continues:

> When I gave Elisabeth the suggestion that the bloody tears would stop, they did so immediately....Similarly, the suggestion that the wounds on her hands and feet would close up and the pain there go away led to an immediate cessation of the bloody exudate from the wounds and of the pain; after 48 hours the wounds were cicatrized. (p.12)

In his first experiment with the induction of stigmata Lechler found the areas of the stigmata swollen, red, and bloody, but he did not distinctly observe bleeding. In a later experiment he induced the stigmata in the feet again (with the suggestion that she had had a nail driven into each of them). On this occasion he observed bleeding from the wounds of the feet (Figure 2-3). After this, he gave Elisabeth the suggestion that the scars from the previously induced stigmata on her hands would open and bleed. About an hour later he observed bleeding from the wounds on the hands (Figure 2-4).

Lechler also induced other symptoms in Elisabeth with hypnotic suggestions. On one occasion he suggested to her that he was putting a crown of thorns on her head, and as he said this he pressed her forehead. Elisabeth jerked away and complained of pain in her forehead. The next morning the upper part of her forehead was red and swollen, and it showed numerous small areas covered with flecks of blood. Lechler observed that some of the wounds on the forehead were distinctly triangular in shape, therefore corresponding to the wounds that real thorns might sometimes make. (One can see this triangular appearance of some of the wounds in the photograph Lechler published in his monograph [Figure 2-5].) Lechler then gave Elisabeth the further suggestion that these areas would bleed, and, after about an hour, they did so.

In another experiment, Lechler suggested to Elisabeth that she would hold in her mind the image of Jesus carrying his cross. (Lechler had learned that the slide of this scene had particularly affected Elisabeth at the lecture mentioned above that she had attended on Good Friday.) The next morning Elisabeth complained of severe pain in her left shoulder, kept her left arm bent in a kind of spasm, and tilted her trunk toward the left as if carrying a weight on her left shoulder. (Because Lechler had not, in this instance, told her in advance what suggestion he was going to give her, Elisabeth did not understand what had happened to her.) Her left shoulder was markedly swollen, and it was red and sensitive to touch. With suggestions from Lechler all these symptoms dissipated, and Elisabeth's shoulder was entirely normal by the same evening. Lechler did not

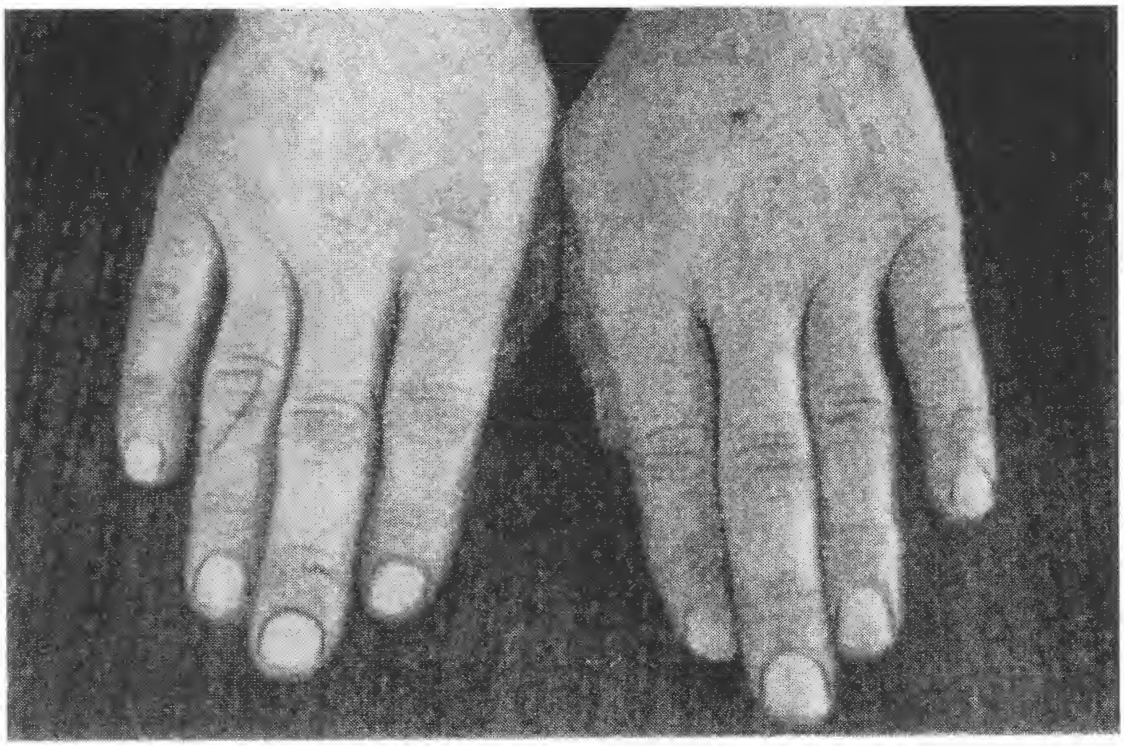

Figure 2-1 Stigmata induced on the hands of Elisabeth K. (Lechler's patient) with suggestions during hypnosis. (From Lechler, 1933.) (Courtesy of Staatsbibliothek, Munich, Germany.)

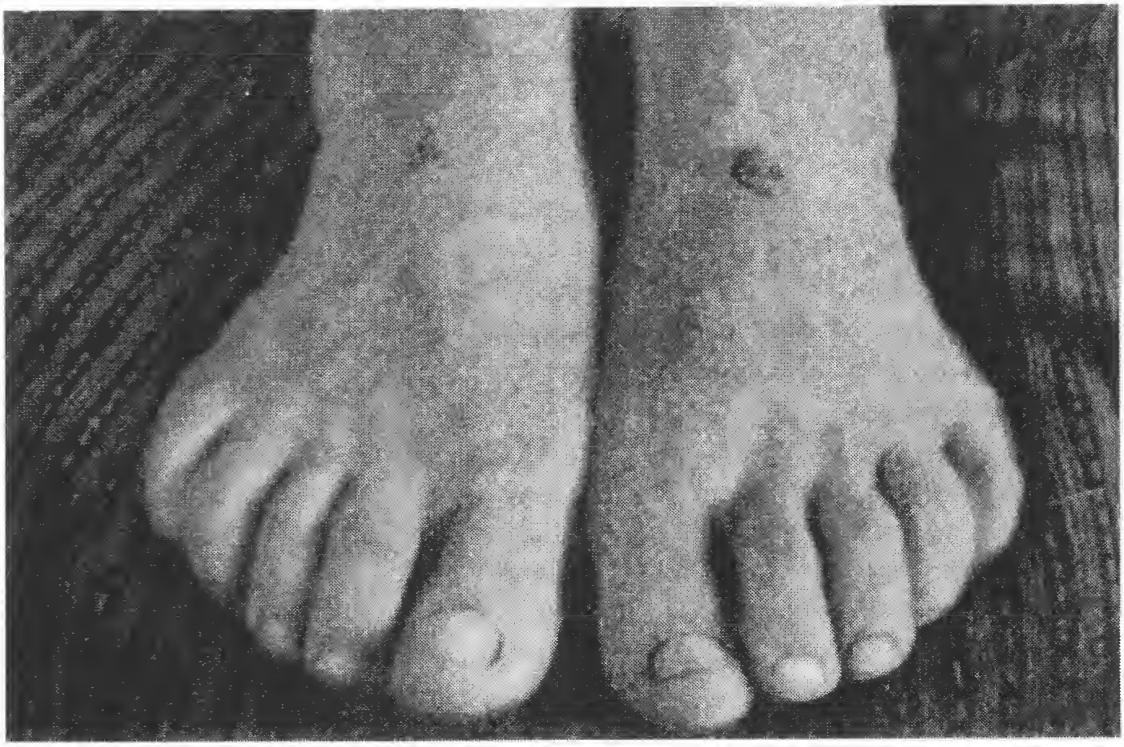

Figure 2-2 Stigmata induced on the feet of Elisabeth K. (Lechler's patient) with suggestions during hypnosis. (From Lechler, 1933.) (Courtesy of Staatsbibliothek, Munich, Germany.)

Figure 2-3 Stigmata induced by suggestion on the feet of Elisabeth K. from which Lechler observed bleeding. (From Lechler, 1933.) (Courtesy of Staatsbibliothek, Munich, Germany.)

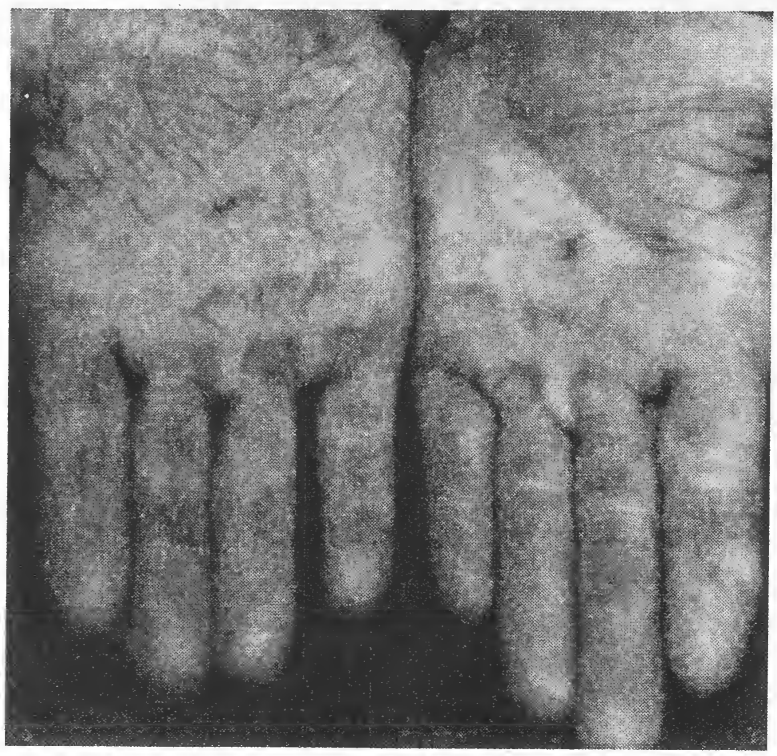

Figure 2-4 Stigmata induced by suggestion on the hands of Elisabeth K. from which Lechler observed bleeding. (From Lechler, 1933.) (Courtesy of Staatsbibliothek, Munich, Germany.)

Figure 2-5 Wounds induced on the forehead of Elisabeth K. by suggestion during hypnosis that a crown of thorns had been put on her head. Several of the wounds had a triangular shape such as thorns might make. (From Lechler, 1933.) (Courtesy of Staatsbibliothek, Munich, Germany.)

mention any suggestions that Elisabeth develop a wound of the chest, and she did not develop one there spontaneously.

After his first experiments Lechler realized that he had not kept Elisabeth under surveillance at all times following his suggestions that she develop various symptoms. He could not be positive that she had not, when alone, scratched herself or otherwise caused the various wounds artifactually in compliance with his wishes. Accordingly, he repeated the experiments in which he induced the stigmata of the hands and feet, the bloody tears, and the bleeding from the forehead. In all the later experiments he had Elisabeth under continuous surveillance, either by himself or by nurses from a nearby hospital. In several of these experiments Lechler himself observed the onset of the induced bleeding.

Lechler's monograph includes some further observations he made of Elisabeth's extraordinary capacity to visualize, and to seem to live herself, scenes about which she was reading or thinking. On one occasion, Lechler gave

her the suggestion that she would read the story of the Passion in the Gospel according to St. John and, with the aid of illustrations in the book she was to read, let herself experience the events as fully as she could. Elisabeth read the passage in the Bible, put it away, and closed her eyes. She then seemed—with groaning and crying—to relive the events of the Passion. She did not fully respond to questions, but from her few answers and spontaneous mutterings Lechler followed the sequence of what she seemed to be living. The culmination came when Elisabeth assumed the position of someone crucified, almost stopped breathing, and then said softly: "Now it is over." After this she seemed barely to be breathing and for several minutes did not answer questions. Lechler urgently instructed her to answer, and finally she began to breathe regularly and to weep. She then said that she had watched the Savior being crucified and had then herself been crucified where the thieves had been placed. "I am a thief," she said, "and I belong among the thieves." Evidently, she had felt herself so fully into the scene of the Passion that she had seemed to live through, and almost die of, being crucified herself. Lechler gave her a suggestion to awaken, and she rapidly regained her normal state without having any memory of what she had gone through.

In later experiments Lechler instructed Elisabeth to relive the Passion but added the explicit suggestion that she was to see herself only among the spectators. Even with this modifying suggestion, Elisabeth, as she ran over the scenes in her mind, exhibited strong emotions. In Lechler's words:

> When she saw the suffering Savior, her face showed signs of fright and sorrow. Sometimes she opened her eyes wide and then closed them. Her breathing was deep and labored. Her forehead was furrowed and she groaned and wept. She moved her head and her eyes, as if following the events. (p. 18)

Elisabeth could assume completely different attitudes in response to other suggestions of which Lechler described several examples.

Impressionable persons capable of developing stigmata may occur more commonly than students of this subject have realized. Hanauer (1972) reported the case of a physician of Silesia, Dr. A. Mutke, who had steeped himself in information about the case of Therese Neumann, which received immense publicity during the 1920s and 1930s. During this period, the physician became severely ill. As he was recovering, a colleague visited him one day and said to him: "What has happened to your hands? You are stigmatized." On the back of each of the physician's hands there was a dark red, almost bloody area that was fairly well defined and about the size of a 2 mark piece (of that period in Germany.) The physician had a similar mark on his shoulder. The stigmata appeared and disappeared—on both hands—five times in all. In November 1934 Dr. Mutke wrote a report of his experience to the Bishop of Regensburg, but the case never became publicly known, and we lack further details. (I have drawn my summary of it from Hanauer, 1972, pp. 91-92).

Psychological Factors Associated with Stigmata

Every stigmatist has had in his or her mind some image of the crucifixion of Jesus. We have seen also that at least some of the stigmata varied in correspondence to the different images held in the devotees' minds. What else do stigmatists have in common?

They seem to fall into two large groups: saints and persons who are less than saints. The saints have had in common prolonged absorption in the life and death of Jesus. Some modern readers may find barely credible the descriptions of saints who have focused their attention for hours at a time as they contemplated Jesus' Passion. The attention span of most modern Western persons has become extremely short, and is perhaps becoming shorter through much exposure to the images of television screens that change with kaleidoscopic speed. To aid my readers' appreciation of these concentrations of attention—which today seem so extraordinary—I shall quote some passages that describe the powers in this respect of some saintly persons. Here is an account of one of the ecstasies of Friar Bernard, a follower of St. Francis of Assisi:

> ...he was in church hearing mass, and with his whole mind lifted up to God, he became so absorbed and rapt in God that he perceived not when the body of Christ was elevated, nor knelt down, nor drew off his cowl as the other friars did; but without moving his eyes, stood with fixed gaze, insensible to outward things from morn till noon. (Okey, 1910, p. 54)

And here is a description of the concentration of Friar James, another of St. Francis' followers:

> This Friar James...was rapt in God while at prayer, and remained thus rapt in ecstasy three days, bereft of all bodily senses, and was so insensible that the friars doubted lest he were truly dead. (Okey, 1910, p. 86)

St. Francis himself probably exceeded all his friars in the astonishing powers of concentration that he showed. The following description helps us to appreciate this:

> And thus he passed all that night in these holy exercises, without sleep; and in the morning his companions, knowing that St. Francis, by reason of the fatigues of that night passed without sleep, was very feeble in body,...went to a poor peasant...and...craved the loan of his ass for St. Francis. (Okey, 1910, p. 102)

A biographer of St. Gemma Galgani (1878-1903) wrote:

> The greater ecstasies of Gemma were less frequent, but of a deeper and loftier nature. They also lasted longer, from half an hour to an hour, and in them she remained wholly insensible. (Proserpio, 1940, p. 141)

I have given two examples only of the prolonged concentration on Jesus recorded of many saints who developed stigmata. Such monoideism—to use the word of Braid (1855), who also coined the word *hypnotism*—is found to occur voluntarily among saints and other gifted persons with heightened powers of concentration; it can be induced in more ordinary persons through the procedures of hypnosis.

The stigmatists who were not saints had also concentrated on the Passion of Jesus, but often with an important difference: their concentrations might be brief instead of prolonged. For example, Elisabeth K. developed pain in her hands and feet from nothing more than looking at a picture of Jesus' crucifixion, and her fully formed stigmata developed overnight after Lechler gave her the suggestion that she would feel as if nails were being driven through her hands and feet. Ethel Chapman developed stigmata overnight after talking about the crucifixion of Jesus, looking at an illustration of it, and praying to God for some sign of His presence (Harrison, 1981). The rapidity with which stigmata manifested in these cases contrasts with the case of St. Francis of Assisi; he did not develop stigmata until about 40 days after he first prayed that he might experience the sufferings of Jesus on the cross (Sabatier, 1894/1931).

The physiological process in the development of stigmata may extend over years.[8] On this feature Thurston (1922) wrote:

> ...there has usually been a vivid realization of and concentration upon the wounds of the Passion for some time before any bleeding stigmata have shown themselves. In quite the majority of cases intense pain has been felt for months, sometimes for years, in the places where the wounds subsequently opened. (p. 195)

These differences suggest that humans vary greatly in their aptitude, so to speak, for expressing mental images in bodily changes. We might have inferred the existence of such differences from noting that many saints have not developed stigmata even though they concentrated on the Passion of Jesus just as intensely and for just as long as those who did develop them. The question arises of whether the essential differences between the two groups are in the vividness with which

[8]The case of St. Diomira Allegri (1651-1677) (Thurston, 1922) may seem exceptional. She assumed the posture of someone being crucified and, like Elisabeth K., appeared to live through the sufferings of Jesus. She developed bleeding stigmata within the course of one night while being continuously watched by companion nuns. However, because Diomira was a nun, I think we can assume that she had already spent much time contemplating the Passion of Jesus, which Elisabeth had not done before the first time she was affected by seeing a slide show illustrating Jesus' sufferings.

A better example of the rapid development of stigmata occurred in the case of Ethel Chapman (Harrison, 1981); she apparently developed her stigmata overnight.

images are held in the mind, in a physiological susceptibility for the physical expression of images, or in both these features.

In looking for an answer to this question we should note first the high proportion of females among all recorded stigmatists. Imbert-Gourbeyre (1873/1894) listed 321 stigmatists, of whom 280 were female and only 41 male. Even if we subtract from Imbert-Gourbeyre's inventory a large number of cases that were poorly observed or in which the stigmata did not fully develop (with the five principal wounds of the hands, feet, and chest), the number of female subjects far exceeds that of male subjects. Thurston (1952) stated that although in the last 7 centuries there had been "an immense number of female mystics about whose complete stigmatization no doubt is possible, there are only two quite clear cases of men being externally marked with all the five wounds" (p. 123). Thurston was referring to St. Francis of Assisi and Padre Pio of Pietrelcina; some additonal male stigmatists have been observed since his time.

In trying to understand the special quality that made his patient Elisabeth susceptible to the development of stigmata, Lechler (1933) attributed to her an unusual degree of what he called, in German, *Beeindruckbarkeit*, which is perhaps best translated by the English word *impressionability*. Of the persons having this quality, Lechler said:

> Every impression, especially those of an unpleasant kind, goes deeply into the person and becomes fixed in the subconscious levels of the mind; in contrast, a healthy person can work through and eliminate [from his or her mind] even the worst experiences. (p. 25; my translation)

I have already cited, from Lechler's report, examples of Elisabeth's impressionability even before she responded as she did to his suggestions that she develop stigmatic wounds. Lechler pointed out that Therese Neumann (whose stigmata he accepted as authentic) showed a similar impressionability in her childhood. He noted: "When anyone talked about the sufferings of the Savior, tears would come into her eyes" (Lechler, 1933, p. 33). He thought that Therese's astonishingly good memory, sometimes for small details of events that had happened 10 years or more earlier, was another indication of her impressionability; and he contrasted her hypermnesia with that of healthy persons who do not long retain the details of events in their minds.

The history of many stigmatists before they developed their wounds includes episodes that showed their sensitivity to stresses, which often manifested in physical as well as in purely mental symptoms. Such symptoms are not incompatible with the piety for which nearly all stigmatists were renowned.

Here it is worth noting that until the middle of the 19th century it was generally believed that the conditions identified as hysteria occurred exclusively among females; the word *hysteria* itself derived from the Greek word for *uterus* and from the belief held by Greek physicians that the symptoms were due to wan-

derings of that organ around the inside of the body. Patients with hysteria are usually (and perhaps invariably) extremely impressionable; and this is so much the case that some able 19th-century physicians, notably J.-M. Charcot (Ellenberger, 1970; A. R. G. Owen, 1971; Veith, 1965), thought that hysteria and hypnotizability were identical.[9]

Morgan and Hilgard (1973) found that young married women between the ages of 21 and 32 showed significantly higher scores on a test of hypnotic susceptibility than did men of the same age. These observations seem like a more quantitative statement of an observation that Paget (1873) made more than a century ago when he wrote: "Nervous mimicry [of organic diseases] is much more frequent in females than in males" (p. 547). In juxtaposing hypnotic susceptibility with "nervous mimicry," I do not mean to fall into the error of saying that these are the same. Hysterical patients may in fact be difficult to hypnotize. However, they are more suggestible than healthy persons; they give themselves suggestions of disability, which may derive from seeing other persons with a disease they then assume.

If females *are* more impressionable than males, this fact might account for the higher incidence of stigmatists among them than among men. We should, however, also consider the possibility of a physiological difference between persons who develop stigmata and those who do not, and I shall consider that topic later.

Summarizing Remarks about Stigmata

Persons who develop stigmata must be extraordinary in one of two ways: Either they must be willing to concentrate singlemindedly for weeks, months, or longer on the wounds of Jesus, or they must have the quality of unusual impressionability that Elisabeth K. and perhaps Ethel Chapman had. Some physiological susceptibility may be a further requirement. We are led to this last conclusion by the failure I mentioned of some saints to develop stigmata even though they seemed to concentrate as intensely, and for as long, on Jesus' Passion as did the saints who did develop stigmata.

[9]I have used the word *hysteria* reluctantly. The etiology it suggests has long been shown an absurdity, and, in addition, the word has picked up connotations of imaginary disease and even malingering that are often discrediting to patients designated by the word. Numerous authors have protested against it (Macalpine and Ross, 1956; Paget, 1873), but it persists more or less. Slavney (1990) in the course of thoroughly reviewing the history and present knowledge of disorders labelled "hysteria" predicted, perhaps too optimistically, the imminent demise of the word *hysteria.* Its proposed and currently official successor (in American psychiatry), "Conversion Disorder," (*Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders,* 1994), is no improvement, because this term derives from an unsubstantiated theory of process. The essential feature of conditions called hysterical or conversion disorder is that the patient's belief about a disability of his or her body results in a physical disability corresponding to the belief. Terms like *hysteria* and *conversion disorder* distract attention from careful investigation of how beliefs and related mental images about the body come to implement physical changes in the persons affected.

OTHER IMITATIVE BODILY CHANGES

Stigmata occur in some persons when they concentrate on the sufferings of Jesus; we have seen that other conditions are required before stigmata occur, but sympathy with Jesus is essential and always found among Christian stigmatists. However, what I am now calling sympathetic bodily changes may occur outside a religious context. For example, a few instances have been reported of lesions that one person experienced while, or nearly at the time, another person suffered in a similar way. In the preceding section I gave some examples of these from the history of Elisabeth K., the patient Lechler studied, and I will now mention some additional cases of the type.

Perhaps the commonest cases of such sympathetic bodily changes occur in the condition of couvade in which the husband of a pregnant woman experiences some of his wife's symptoms (for example, nausea, vomiting, and abdominal pain) of the pregnancy and delivery of a baby (Lipkin and Lamb, 1982; Trethowan and Conlon, 1965). Instances of couvade can be impressive to bystanders as well as to the man experiencing it.

The following five cases illustrate profound localized effects on bodily tissues from a strong identification with an injured person.

During the French invasion of Russia in 1812, a Cossack happened to trap a stray French soldier in a blind alley of Moscow. They fought with swords, and the Cossack inflicted severe wounds on the French soldier. By chance, a Russian civilian was in the alley at the time, and he could not get out of it until the fight concluded. He watched it with "deadly fear." Afterward, when he went home, he found that he had "on his arm and elsewhere on his body wounds similar to those the Cossack had given the French soldier; they bled and he had to have them treated medically" (Kerner, 1833, vol. 4, 152-153; my translation).

Pabst (cited by Jacobi, 1923) described the case of a young woman whose brother, a soldier, had been condemned for some failing to "run the gauntlet" and be beaten on the back as he passed other soldiers lined up along the way. The sister remained at home and was not a witness of her brother's ordeal. She was observed, however, to get into a state of excitement at the time of the brother's punishment; she whined and moaned, then fainted and had to be put to bed. It was then found that her back showed signs of having been beaten, and it was bleeding.

The next case I take from Tuke (1872), and give it in his words and those of the affected person. It is that of

> ...a highly intelligent lady well known to myself. Although the emotion had for its object another person, it none the less acted upon her own system:
>
> One day she was walking past a public institution, and observed a child, in whom she was particularly interested, coming out through an iron gate. She saw that he let go the gate after opening it, and that it seemed likely to close upon him, and concluded that it would do so with such force as to crush his ankle; however, this did not happen. "It was impossible," she says,

> "by word or act to be quick enough to meet the supposed emergency; and, in fact, I found I could not move, for such intense pain came on in the ankle, corresponding to the one which I thought the boy would have injured, that I could only put my hand on it to lessen its extreme painfulness. *I am sure I did not move so as to strain or sprain it.* The walk home—a distance of about a quarter of a mile—was very laborious, and in taking off my stocking I found *a circle round the ankle, as if it had been painted with red-currant juice, with a large spot of the same, on the outer part.* By morning the whole foot was inflamed, and I was a prisoner to my bed for many days." (pp. 260-261)

Carter (1853) published a similar case, and I give it also in the author's words:

> A very remarkable example of the power of attention to direct the emotional influence, has lately been related to the author by a medical friend, under whose observation it fell, and whose exactitude and veracity may be implicitly relied upon. A lady, who was watching her little child at play, saw a heavy window-sash fall upon its hand, cutting off three of the fingers, and she was so much overcome by fright and distress, as to be unable to render it any assistance. A surgeon was speedily obtained, who, having dressed the wounds, turned himself to the mother, whom he found seated, moaning, and complaining of pain in her hand. On examination, three fingers, corresponding to those injured in the child, were discovered to be swollen and inflamed, although they had ailed nothing prior to the accident. In four and twenty hours incisions were made into them, and pus was evacuated, sloughs were afterwards discharged, and the wounds ultimately healed. Now, there can be no doubt that, in this case, the mother's emotion was directed, by observation of the parts injured, upon the corresponding parts of her own system, there working a change in the circulation or nutrition, sufficient to excite acute inflammatory action. (pp. 24-25)

Rantasalo and Penttinen (1959) reported the fifth case in the present group. It was that of a 27-year-old mother who had not previously suffered from any skin disease or had blisters on her skin or mucous membranes. When she became pregnant with her first child, she developed a blister on her right upper arm, but no cause for this was identified. Later, when her first baby was to be vaccinated against smallpox, she hesitated about the matter, fearing to oppose her mother-in-law, who disapproved of vaccination. Finally, the patient's baby was vaccinated, and the patient herself developed a blister at the same site of her right upper arm as that of her child's vaccination. On three later occasions of her children being vaccinated she developed blisters at the same site. Still later, she developed a blister on the same arm, although 2 centimeters distant from the site of the earlier blisters, during a period of stress. On three of the six mentioned occasions herpes simplex virus was cultured from the blisters. The patient felt "slightly indisposed"

before a blister developed. It took a few days to develop and lasted "for some days." The authors of this report identified no cause for the mother's blisters apart from—in four instances—her identification with her children who were receiving (slightly) painful vaccinations.

The foregoing five cases differ from the cases of stigmatists. They had in common a brief exposure of the affected person to a physical trauma in another person or, in the second case, information about the trauma without direct perception of it. The affected persons did not concentrate for long on the injury to the other person; instead, a strong emotion of brief duration occurred.

Localized physical changes induced during strong identification with another person may also occur more gradually. Millet, Lief, and Mittelman (1953) reported the case of a woman who developed episodic vascular constriction of the limbs (Raynaud's Disease) following an extramarital affair with a man who had had his left arm amputated. Her disability began in the left arm, the limb of her lover's amputation, and then spread to other limbs.[10]

EFFECTS OF SUGGESTIONS DIRECTED TOWARD PARTICULAR REGIONS OF THE BODY

In reviewing the circumstances that seem to lead to stigmata, I described Lechler's observations of the effects of suggestions directed toward particular areas of the body (Lechler, 1933). The suggestion by which he induced stigmatic wounds in his patient Elisabeth K. showed how one person can focus another person's attention on one or more regions of the body and thereby induce physical changes at indicated sites. I also gave some examples of heterosuggestions that influenced existing stigmata. In the present section I shall return to this subject and describe some additional examples from published cases of the effects of suggestions on bodily functions.

Suggestions may produce localized effects on the body in two different ways. First, one person can give to another a *general* direction in the form of a suggestion. If the suggestion is then accepted, it becomes implemented by particular organs without the subject necessarily having mental images of the physical changes that ensue. Second, the subject may be given suggestions restricted to the functioning of a *particular* organ or small area of the body.

Implementation of General Suggestions for Bodily Changes

An example of this type is the suggestion to a subject under hypnosis that he is thirsty. Such a suggestion may cause not only the subjective sensation of thirst,

[10]This detail was not included in the published report of the case. I learned about it in a personal communication from Dr. Harold Lief in January 1990.

but also the changes in kidney function that accompany dehydration (Corson et al., 1960; McCally and Barnard, 1968). In the most extreme form of such general suggestions the recipient is told to die. Susceptible persons given such a suggestion may die within a few hours. However, I shall defer a discussion of this topic to a section on cursing in Chapter 3.

Further examples of general suggestions, which the body then somehow implements in detail, occur in pseudocyesis. In this condition a woman who believes herself to be pregnant when she is not may show widespread physical changes similar to those that occur with true pregnancy. Her menses (usually) cease, and her abdomen becomes enlarged and protuberant as the "pregnancy" progresses. Her breasts also enlarge and show pigmentary changes of the nipples. Changes also occur in the levels of the hormones of the pituitary and ovary that are normally altered during pregnancy, although these are less than those found in a real pregnancy (Fried et al., 1951; Schopbach, Fried, and Rakoff, 1952). Investigations of altered levels of hormones in pseudocyesis have not always yielded consistent results, but all the studies of hormonal assays reviewed by Murray and Abraham (1978) agreed in showing elevated levels of prolactin (PRL).

Comment. Although the physical changes just mentioned occurred in a variety of organs, we should not conclude from this that a mental image directly influenced the peripheral organs affected. In the experiments with suggestions of feeling thirsty during hypnosis, the altered renal function may have resulted from changes in the secretion of antidiuretic hormone (ADH) in the pituitary gland. Similarly, changes in the secretion of the pituitary's lactogenic (luteotropic) hormone may produce many, if not all of the various peripheral signs observed in patients with pseudocyesis. Even so, it is remarkable that beliefs—whether induced by the patient himself (or herself) or offered as suggestions by a hypnotist—can lead to the increased secretion of one pituitary hormone if the patient thinks "I am thirsty" and of another one if she thinks "I am pregnant."

Suggestions of Localized Bodily Changes

Many experiments of this type have been conducted, and I propose to mention only a few in order to emphasize the occurrence in some persons of changes in small, localized areas of the body in relation to mental images of these areas. I shall first give some examples of different organs and bodily areas thus affected and then consider the particular conditions required for such changes to occur.

Changes in Heart Rate. Van Pelt (1956) induced tachycardia in a (hypnotized) subject by giving him the suggestion that his heart was accelerating. The subject's heart rate increased from 78 to 135 beats per minute. Van Pelt also induced tachycardia in the same subject by giving him (again hypnotized) the instruction to imagine that he was traveling at a high speed in an automobile that was about to crash. Barber (1961) criticized Van Pelt's experiments on the grounds that the subject may have been able to accelerate his heart rate voluntarily

(without hypnosis) and perhaps did this compliantly in response to both the two different suggestions Van Pelt offered. It is true that some persons can voluntarily accelerate their heart rate (Favill and White, 1917; J. T. King, Jr., 1920; Tarchanoff, 1885; Van de Velde, 1897; H. F. West and Savage, 1918) or lower it (Kothari, Bordia, and Gupta, 1973; McClure, 1958). This, however, is precisely the point that I wish to make here: that some persons (with or without suggestions from another person) can, only by thinking about their heart, change its rate.

Control of Bleeding with Suggestion during Hypnosis. Suggestions during hypnosis have been used successfully in the control of intractable bleeding in a patient with hemophilia (Fredericks, 1967). The Russian peasant Rasputin exerted an influence over the hemophiliac Tsarevich Alexis that was sufficiently powerful to arrest some of the boy's hemorrhages (Amalrik, 1982). The arrest of bleeding in a hemophiliac may be regarded as a *general* response to suggestion and therefore off my theme in this chapter, which is *local* bodily changes. However, the immediate cause of uncontrolled bleeding in patients with hemophilia is a deficiency of a factor essential for the clotting of blood. To stop a hemophiliac from bleeding through suggestion requires some kind of psychosomatic wisdom that identifies and corrects this deficiency.

Apart from the treatment of hemophilia, hypnosis has been used successfully in the control of intractable bleeding that was restricted to a particular site, such as the upper gastrointestinal tract (Bishay, Stevens, and Lee, 1984) or the nose (McCord, 1968). In such instances we can presume some local effect.

Bourru and Burot (1885) reported a series of experiments that deserve mention here. A patient with "hystero-epilepsy" was hypnotized and given the suggestion that at a particular time mentioned he would bleed, first from his nose and subsequently from places indicated on his skin; at the mentioned time blood exuded from the indicated sites.

Further evidence of a localized effect on bleeding comes from studies of the influence of suggestion on menstruation, the topic of the next section.

Changes in Menstruation. As I mentioned above, patients with pseudocyesis (nearly always) stop menstruating or have hypomenorrhea. The idea "I am pregnant" can thus markedly modify menstruation.

However, direct suggestions about menstruation during hypnosis may also affect this function—stopping or starting it according to the suggestion.

Forel (1902) reported regulation of menses with hypnotic suggestions in several women with hypermenorrhea and metrorrhagia. He described two of these cases in detail. To one patient (a nurse at his hospital) Forel gave the suggestion that her menses would start at 7:00 a.m. on the first or second of each month, whether the month had 28, 29, 30, or 31 days; and this instruction was followed for (at least) 6 years, during which Forel observed the patient, as did a supervising nurse. Forel commented on the question this case raises about the connection between ovulation and menstruation. He did not think it reasonable to suppose that the patient's ovulation followed the calendar, even in leap years. So he was inclined to conclude that menstruation need not be inevitably linked with ovulation.

Kohnstamm (1907) repeated Forel's success with one patient. With a single suggestion during hypnosis he induced menstruation on the first day of each calendar month; the effect lasted 5 months before the patient needed further suggestions.

Schindler (1927) reported the immediate arrest with a hypnotic suggestion of prolonged (14 days) menstruation in one patient and the similar induction of menstruation in another patient with amenorrhea. He also set the date, the hour, and the duration of this patient's menstruation with suggestions that maintained their effect for 6 months. Erickson (1977) described his use of hypnosis to treat successfully a patient with irregular menstruation and severe dysmenorrhea. Her menstrual periods became regular and painless and remained so over a period of several years (up to the time of Erickson's report).

Enlargement of Breasts. Erickson (1960, 1977) reported successful enlargement of the breasts in three young women whom he treated with hypnotic suggestions. Subsequently, LeCron (1969) obtained breast growth in all but 3 of 20 women to whom he gave hypnotic suggestions that this would happen.

Erickson and LeCron both relied on the patient's reports that their breasts had enlarged during the treatment. J. E. Williams (1974) conducted a more controlled study that included measurements of the breasts before and after treatment. He also compared the results in three women who were hypnotized but not given suggestions for breast enlargement with those in three women who were hypnotized and given these suggestions. Only the women given the suggestion for breast enlargement actually showed such a change.

Staib and Logan (1977) and Willard (1977) repeated Williams's observations. Staib and Logan included careful controls against the spurious appearance of breast enlargement due to increased muscular development of the chest (for example, from exercises), weight gain, or sexual arousal during the measurements of breast size. All these factors were effectively eliminated. In particular, weight gain did not account for the results; in Willard's group 42% of his subjects had a loss of weight greater than 4 pounds during the treatment period, and yet they still had an enlargement of the breasts. Staib and Logan noted a tendency to a general reshaping of the torso in some of their subjects so that their waists decreased in circumference while their breasts enlarged. At a follow-up examination of their patients they were found to have retained 81% of the enlargement gained at the end of the treatment; this suggests that the enlargement was due to a real growth in mammary tissue and not to temporary engorgement with blood. Willard instructed his patients to practice visualizing warmth and increased blood flow with pulsation in their breasts. He made an observation pertinent to a central theme of this work that "the subjects who were able to visualize the greatest percentage of times tried had the greatest increase in breast size" (Willard, 1977, p. 195).

Glove and Stocking Anesthesia. In this condition the person afflicted has an area of anesthesia on the distal parts of the arms, the legs, or both. A horizontal line demarcates—often sharply—the boundary between the distal anesthetic parts of the limb and the proximal parts having normal sensation. The frontier does not correspond with the areas of skin served by the peripheral

nerves; instead, it corresponds to an idea or image that the patient has in his or her mind. This condition has been familiar to psychiatrists and neurologists from at least the last half of the 19th century (Charcot, 1892; Janet, 1907/1920). It may be induced in hypnotized subjects. Despite the general decline in the 20th century of the conditions of heightened suggestibility known as hysteria, occasional cases of glove and stocking anesthesia have been reported in recent years (Erickson, 1977).

Oedème Bleu. In the condition of *oedème bleu*, first described by Paget (1873) and Charcot (1892), the patient affected develops a lymphedema of the hand and forearm, usually unilateral. The edema is of the non-pitting type, and the skin over it is cold and often blue or purplish; sensation and function of the affected area are lessened, and sometimes there is total anesthesia. Although the condition often follows some injury to the hand, the injury is usually minor and insufficient to account for the prolonged symptoms.

The condition appears to be the result of prolonged concentration on the area by the patient (despite expressions of indifference about the disability). Medical and surgical attention focused on the affected limb may exacerbate the condition (Brunning, Gibson, and Perry, 1980). Psychotherapy that diverts attention from the local symptoms (by ignoring them) and assists in the resolution of social stresses may lead to complete recovery (Macalpine and Ross, 1956).

Charcot (1892) gave one of the earliest demonstrations of *localized* physical effects from suggestion when, in 1890, he induced a fully developed *oedème bleu* in a young woman 23 years of age. Within 4 days of being given suggestions during hypnosis her right hand became markedly swollen and anesthetic, and it developed the characteristic violet discoloration of the condition; the left hand was unaffected.

Blisters Induced by Hypnotic Suggestion in Specified Areas of Skin. Since the last quarter of the 19th century hypnotists have reported the production of blisters on the skin through hypnotic suggestions.[11] Gauld (1990, 1992), Johnson and Barber (1976), and Pattie (1941) reviewed the published reports of these experiments.

In the standard experiment of this type the subject is hypnotized and told that he or she will be touched at a particular area by some burning (or extremely hot) object, and the hypnotist states or implies that the subject will develop a burn or blister at the place stimulated. The subject is then usually lightly touched with

[11]I owe to Dr. Alan Gauld the information that what may have been the first reported experiment of this type was made by Lelieurre de l'Aubépin (1819, pp. 110-111) in the first quarter of the 19th century. The experiment, actually devised by the subject herself, consisted in suggesting that a piece of cloth had been covered with mustard so that it would act as a (therapeutic) irritant when applied to the skin of the abdomen. The suggestion was given, a plain piece of cloth (having no mustard on it) was placed on the abdomen, and the next day the skin at the site of application was found inflamed.

More systematic experiments seem not to have been conducted before the 1880s (Beaunis, 1886; Delboeuf, 1887; Jendrássik, 1888).

the object, which is, however, not hot at all. After receiving the suggestion and the stimulation following it, the subject is examined again at intervals of minutes, hours, and days. Some experimenters bandaged or covered with a watch crystal the suggested sites, whereas others did not. Also, some kept the subjects under close surveillance after receiving the suggestion, whereas others did not. Schrenck-Notzing (1896) showed the importance of such precautions. He reported the case of a subject of one of these experiments who, during a period when she was not being observed, had tried to produce a blister by scratching herself with a hairpin at the place where the hypnotist had suggested that a blister should form; this was her way of conforming to the hypnotist's suggestion. A second experiment with stricter control of this subject gave negative results.

Since the publication of Schrenck-Notzing's observations, and even before (Beaunis, 1886), experimenters have usually given particular attention to measures that would prevent the subject from producing blisters by manual manipulation or in any way other than through the psychosomatic effects of suggestion. For example, in the experiments reported by Kohnstamm and Pinner (1908) and by Alrutz (1915) the experimenters covered the area suggested for blister formation with a piece of transparent glass affixed firmly to the subject's limb. A glass covering would seem to preclude any attempt to scratch the indicated area, such as might occur if it were covered only with a cloth bandage.

Although Johnson and Barber (1976) expressed dissatisfaction with the controls exercised in many experiments (as well as with some of their other features), Pattie (1941), who gave particular attention to the question of control of the subject during the experiments, did not; the skepticism he expressed mainly derived—he admitted this frankly—from his inability to conjecture any physiological process by which such blisters could be produced. I cannot expect all my readers to study the original reports of these experiments for themselves, as I have done; and I shall therefore summarize the more important ones, giving particular attention to the precautions the experimenters took to eliminate explanations other than suggestion for the results they observed.

One of the earliest experiments, that reported by Beaunis (1886), included excellent control of the subject, and there were also several competent witnesses to the events. After being hypnotized, the subject was told that a vesicatory (that would produce a blister) was being applied to an area at the back of one shoulder beyond the reach of the subject's hand. A few postage stamps and a bandage were then placed at the site suggested. After this, the experimenters kept the subject under close surveillance during a day and a night; the following morning the area of the suggested blister was reddened and swollen. Later in the day distinct blisters developed and discharged a serous fluid.

Jendrássik (1888) was another early reporter of these experiments. During one that he conducted, the subject was watched continuously following the suggestion of blister formation and developed a blister 5 hours later. However, the blister appeared not on the left upper arm (the place suggested for it) but on the *right* upper arm.

Rybalkin (1890) kept his subject under surveillance for several hours. The subject developed redness and painful sensitivity to touch in the suggested area (of the arm) within a few minutes of being stimulated (by touching a cold stove that he believed was hot). Three hours later the same area was swollen and exquisitely sensitive to slight touching. The arm was bandaged, and the subject went to sleep (apparently without supervision during the night). The following morning, 14 hours after the stimulation, several blisters and bullae were present at the site stimulated.

Forel (1898) reported the induction of two blisters (by Wetterstrand) in a 19-year-old subject who was watched continuously after the suggestions were given until he developed blisters (on the hand and thumb) 8 hours later.

Heller and Schultz (1909) produced with suggestion a blister on the hand of their subject within 6 hours of giving him the suggestion of blister formation. These authors did not specify the control they exercised on the subject between the time of giving him the suggestion and that of removing a bandage they had placed over the area of the suggestion and observing the blister; however, they worked in a dermatology clinic, and from observing the healing and formation of a scar at the site of the blister they were convinced that they had observed genuine epithelial necrosis and not an instance of factitious urticaria.

Podiapolskii (1909) reported the production of a blister through suggestion in a subject who was kept continuously under observation between the time of receiving the suggestion and that of developing blisters at two sites on her back about 18 hours later. The areas where blisters formed were 1 centimeter and 3 centimeters distant from the sites suggested.

Ullman (1947) suggested to a hypnotized soldier that he relive a battle experience (which had led to his developing hysterical blindness), and then he gave the further suggestion that a small particle of molten shell metal had touched the back of his hand. At the same time Ullman gently touched the back of the patient's hand with a small file. After giving this suggestion, Ullman kept his patient under continuous observation for an hour. During this period the patient complained of pain and thought he had perhaps burned himself with a cigarette. At the site suggested an area of pallor surrounded by a ring of erythema developed, and then an early blister appeared. The patient was then allowed to move away from close observation. Approximately 4 hours later, Ullman observed that he had developed a full blister about 1 centimeter in diameter.

In considering cases in which the subject developed changes in the skin while being watched, I can include Schindler's (1927) report of the formation of blisters in ecchymoses that he suggested would develop in a patient who suffered from what would now be called psychogenic purpura. Initially, Schindler did not directly suggest blister formation to his patient, but in one experiment he suggested to her that the area indicated for development of an ecchymosis would "burn." An ecchymosis developed at the site suggested, and it had a blister in its center. This subject later developed blisters at times and at sites suggested by Schindler. Agle, Ratnoff, and Wasman (1967), in similar experiments (which I shall describe in more detail later) with subjects suffering from psychogenic purpura, induced

ecchymotic lesions at particular sites where they suggested to the patients these would occur. (Blisters did not occur with the ecchymoses that they induced.)

Smirnoff (1912) produced blisters with hypnotic suggestions in an unusually short time. In one experiment a blister developed within 30 minutes, and in a second one it developed after about 2 hours. Smirnoff was particularly pleased with his second experiment, when, he stated, the "whole process took place under our eyes." He had two other persons present as witnesses. (His subject did not develop the blister at exactly the spot stimulated, but in a site nearby.) Kohnstamm (1912) also observed the development of a substantial wheal (not a full blister) within 2 hours of a hypnotic suggestion, during which period the patient was under continuous control. Doswald and Kreibich (1906) reported that they had observed the development of erythema at the place suggested for a blister within 3 minutes; and a blister formed at this site within another 6 minutes. (This case appears to hold the record for the speed with which the blister developed.) In a second subject they found that the skin took longer to change, and, although a redness and edema developed at the suggested site, a blister did not.

Suggestions of burns have not been the only stimuli used by hypnotists in producing local reactions in the skin. Two Japanese investigators, Ikemi and Nakagawa (1962), demonstrated a powerful effect from suggesting to their subjects that they had been in contact with poisonous leaves. Their subjects were Japanese high school students who were known to be sensitive (in their skins) to the leaves of certain kinds of trees found in Japan. These trees (*Rhus venicefera* and *Rhus succedanea*) produce in sensitive persons a skin reaction similar to that produced by poison ivy or poison oak in North America; the more severe reactions to the leaves of these trees include the formation of papules and small vesicles or blisters. Some of the students were given suggestions after a procedure for hypnosis, others without this procedure. The latter group had their eyes covered and could not see with what substances the experimenters touched their skins. The experimenters told them that their skin was being touched by toxic leaves when they were in fact touched with harmless ones. All the subjects responded to this suggestion with erythema and itching at the sites stimulated, although none developed blisters. In 12 of the 13 subjects the reaction occurred within an hour or less, and sometimes within about 10 minutes; in a single subject the reaction only developed 6 hours after the suggestion. In a second part of the experiment the same subjects were told that they were being touched with a harmless leaf when they were in fact touched with one that was toxic. Eleven of the 13 subjects did not show the expected dermatitis in response to this contact with the poisonous leaves.

A few hypnotists conducting experiments of this type have suggested the appearance in the skin of a particular pattern. Perhaps the first experimenter to do this was Mabille (1885), who induced in his subject (by suggestion during hypnosis) bleeding from the skin of an arm in an area having the form of a *V* that he (Mabille) had earlier designated. The subject bled from the site indicated, but did not develop a blister. In one of Smirnoff's (1912) experiments he used a letter *C* made of copper as the stimulus applied to the skin of a subject who was told that

she was being burned. A large blister occurred at the site stimulated, and Smirnoff thought that it had somewhat the form of a letter *C*. Jendrássik (1888) conducted more successful experiments of the same type. In the experiment I mentioned earlier, he suggested to his patient the production of a burn in the skin in the form of a small ring. As he made this suggestion, he pressed on the patient's left upper arm a ring having a notch in it. About 5 hours later—the patient having been closely watched during this interval—a blister appeared on the *right* arm at the site where the *left* arm had been stimulated. The blister had the shape of the ring with an indication of the notch.

In another experiment Jendrássik used a metal plate cut in the form of the letter *K*, which was pressed on the skin of the patient's *left* shoulder as she received suggestions that her skin was being touched with a hot iron. She was not allowed to see the *K* shape of the metal touching her shoulder. After some time—Jendrássik did not state how long—a blister in the definite shape of a *K* appeared on the patient's *right* shoulder; moreover, the blister had the form of a mirror-image of the stimulating metal letter *K* that Jendrássik had applied to the left shoulder.

Janet (1889/1919) reported experiments of this type that were equally extraordinary. To his subject Rose, identified by him as hysterical, he made the suggestion during hypnosis of applying a mustard plaster to her abdomen (which he did not do). A few hours later a rectangular area of the abdomen became swollen and dark red. Janet commented to Rose that the area had an odd shape, because the corners seemed cut off. Rose then told him that apparently he (Janet) did not know that the corners of the mustard plasters with which she was familiar were cut off so that they would not hurt the patient. (This was a clear example of the affected area corresponding to an idea in the mind of the subject, not one in that of the hypnotist.) On another occasion, Janet gave Rose the suggestion that the mustard plaster (to be imagined by her as applied to her skin) had the shape of a six-pointed star; and the resulting affected area had just this shape. To another subject, Léonie, Janet gave the suggestion of a mustard plaster in the shape of an *S* applied to her left chest (for the treatment of "nervous asthma"). The illness was relieved, and the ensuing mark on Léonie's chest had the shape of an *S*.

I believe the evidence shows that in at least some of the experiments for the production of blisters through suggestion the experimenters have included adequate controls against artifactual production of the blisters. Any readers unsatisfied on this point should read the original reports of the experiments or conduct new and better ones themselves.

Johnson and Barber (1976) objected that the unheated object with which the hypnotist touched the subject's skin, say the end of a pencil or a fingertip, might, in a sensitive person, produce a reaction in the skin. Perhaps so, but a light stimulus of the kind employed in these experiments would not produce a blister, such as developed in most of them. If the subjects had been as sensitive as this conjecture supposes, they would have had an obtainable history of developing blisters whenever they were lightly touched, and there is no evidence in any of the case reports that they had such sensitivity. Three of the subjects

whose cases I have cited did have a history of unusual reactivity in their skin; they had previously had ecchymoses or dermographism. However, the original reports do not mention such reactivity of the skin in the other subjects, and we should not assume that it was necessarily present.[12] Jendrássik's experiments that I just described seemed especially free of this objection, because the stimuli were applied to the left arm or shoulder and the blisters—of the same form as the stimuli—appeared on the right arm or shoulder.

Some of the subjects in these experiments were also known to be highly suggestible persons, either from a prior diagnosis of hysteria or from previous experiences with hypnosis. However, these last two features of the subjects—that they had sensitive skins and that they were unusually suggestible—are not proper objections to the possibility that, under the conditions and at the times described in the reports, they developed blisters at designated sites when given the suggestion that they would do so. Instead, they are indications of the kinds of persons who can develop blisters after receiving suggestions that they will do so. No one has claimed that everyone can do this; and we need to learn the essential conditions for eliciting this response to hypnotic suggestions. Johnson and Barber (1976) tried to induce blisters with suggestions in a group of 40 student nurses. They obtained reactions in only 2 subjects, and only one of these developed erythema (but without a blister). This experiment by itself, apart from other evidence, tells us that the development of blisters from suggestion occurs only in certain persons and under certain circumstances of which we as yet understand little.

Several experimenters have investigated the influence of pain on the occurrence of hypnotically induced blisters. They have reversed the stimuli and suggestions they gave to their subjects. They have actually burned them with some burning or heated object while at the same time suggesting to them that they would feel no pain, or have no sensation whatever, at the site burned.

Delboeuf (1887) conducted an experiment of this type with a hypnotized female subject to whom he gave the suggestion that her right arm would be insensitive to pain. He then burned both the subject's arms (at exactly corresponding places) to the same extent with a red-hot iron 8 millimeters in diameter. (He had previously obtained the subject's consent to this procedure when she was in her normal condition.) The burns were then bandaged, and the subject sent to bed. When the sites of the burns were examined the following morning, that of the left arm had an inflamed and blistered wound about 3 centimeters in diameter. The site of burning on the right arm (suggested to be insensitive to pain) showed only a small eschar, no bigger than the end of the iron and without redness or other

[12]Borelli (1953) reported a successful experiment in the induction with hypnotic suggestion of a swelling and other changes (but not a full blister). His patient had a history of "neurodermatitis" and eczemalike exudations. I have not described this experiment in detail, because it offered no special feature warranting this.

sign of inflammation. This experiment indicated a strong effect from the suggestion of painlessness in diminishing the local physical reaction to a burn.

Smirnoff (1912) conducted a similar experiment. He told a hypnotized subject that he was going to touch her hand with a pencil, and then, instead of doing that, he touched her with the end of a burning cigar while telling her that she would develop no blister at this site. At the same time he applied an unheated piece of copper to her other hand and told her it would burn her. About 2½ hours later the area that had been actually burned was red, but was not otherwise abnormal, and the subject was then allowed to go home. Approximately 24 hours after Smirnoff had given the two different stimuli, he again examined the subject's two arms. At the place on the right arm, where he had burned the subject with the cigar, she had developed a tiny blister about 4 millimeters in diameter; however, the surrounding area of skin was scarcely reddened. In contrast, at the area (of the left hand) where the subject believed she had been burned but had not been, she had developed a large blister whose surface was raised considerably above that of the surrounding skin; it was about 11 millimeters long and 6 millimeters wide. Around the blister there was a circumscribed region of erythema.

Hadfield (1917) reported a series of experiments with one subject, a sailor who was in a hospital recovering from "shell shock." In the ordinary way of these experiments Hadfield suggested to the subject that he was touching him with a red-hot iron on the arm and that he would develop a blister on his arm at this spot. Hadfield touched the spot with his finger. After two imperfectly controlled although successful experiments, Hadfield conducted another one during which he kept the patient under constant surveillance from the time of giving him the suggestion of developing a blister until the blister actually occurred, about 24 hours later. In a fourth experiment, as Hadfield gave his subject the suggestion that he was touching him with a hot iron and would feel pain, he also touched another spot (again with the suggestion of using a hot iron) but told the subject that at this second place he would not feel any pain. A blister developed at the first site, but not at the second one for which Hadfield had suggested painlessness. In two other experiments Hadfield actually burned his subject with the end of a steel pencil-case that he had heated in a flame. With the first burning he suggested that the subject would have no pain and with the second one that he would have pain. Both burns resulted in blisters; but at the site where pain had been suggested at the time of the burning the blister was surrounded by an area of hyperemia, whereas at the site suggested to have no pain, no hyperemia occurred in the surrounding area. Also, the former blister took longer to heal than the latter one. In a later communication, Hadfield (1920) reported that he had repeated these experiments with another patient and had again demonstrated that the amount of inflammation surrounding a blister could be controlled by suggesting to the patient that she—the second patient was a woman—would or would not have pain with the blister.

Chapman, Goodell, and Wolff (1959) conducted an experiment similar to the ones I have just described and obtained similar results: Hypnotic suggestions of insensitivity reduced the reactions of tissues to a burn. In addition, suggestions

that one arm was more "vulnerable" led to increased reactions after thermal injury compared with the reactions after injury to an arm that had been suggested to be "normal" or "anesthetic."

All the foregoing experiments tell us that the experience of pain plays an important part in the production of blisters induced by suggestion. However, it is important to mention one experiment of this type that gave somewhat contradictory results. Heller and Schultz (1909) suggested to their patient that the burn to be produced under a coin they placed on the patient's hand would be painless; and this subject developed as good a blister as any other in this type of experiment.

Removal of Warts From One Area at a Time by Suggestion. The removal of warts by suggestion has been practiced for centuries, and an extensive literature both in folklore and science has developed on the subject. I do not intend to review it. Most of it does not pertain to the topic on which I am focusing attention in this chapter: localized physical effects of suggestion and imagery. In this connection, however, several papers on the removal of warts by suggestion deserve mention.

Sinclair-Gieben and Chalmers (1959) treated 14 patients who had warts on both sides of the body with hypnotic suggestions that directed the warts to be removed on one side only of the body. Four of the subjects did not attain an adequate depth of hypnosis. In 9 of the remaining 10 patients the warts disappeared on the "treated" side, but not on the "untreated" one. The time taken for disappearance varied between 5 weeks and 3 months. An attempted replication of this experiment with 17 patients confirmed the value of hypnosis in the treatment of warts, but was unsuccessful in the suggestion that they disappear on one side of the body only (Surman et al., 1973). The unilateral disappearance of warts occurred in only 1 patient; in 8 other subjects warts on both sides of the body disappeared (or greatly diminished in number), and in the remaining 8 patients no effect on the warts of either side occurred. Johnson and Barber (1978) similarly found that when they suggested to patients that warts in a particular region would disappear, they did so; but so did some warts in other areas where suggestions had not been directed.

Dreaper (1978), in treating a case of recalcitrant warts by suggestion, endeavored to control against the attribution of the cure to the attention given the patient. He suggested that all the patient's warts except one would disappear. At the beginning of the treatment the patient had numerous warts on both sides of both hands. Dreaper did not give their number, but at least 20 can be seen in the photographs he published. After 10 months of treatment all the warts had disappeared except the one singled out to remain. Dreaper then suggested that it too would disappear, and it did.

Other Skin Diseases Treated with Regionally Directed Suggestions. A. A. Mason (1952, 1955) treated a 16-year-old boy suffering from severe congenital ichthyosiform erythrodermia with suggestions of improvement given during hypnosis. To control against a spontaneous remission (even though this was in the highest degree unlikely) or some other ameliorating factor, Mason suggested to his subject that the skin would clear first in the left arm; and then, after it had improved, he suggested improvement in other parts of the body that he named in

successive treatment sessions. The improvement was rapid, extensive, and sustained for at least 4 years, the period of follow-up (A. A. Mason, 1960b). Wink (1961) repeated Mason's success with two sisters suffering from the same condition. He also employed suggestions directed first at one part and then at other parts of the body. He stated that "though there was a mild improvement in undesignated areas, it was quite overshadowed by the changes in those intended to benefit" (Wink, 1961, p. 743).

Mullins, Murray, and Shapiro (1955) treated an 11-year-old boy suffering from another severe congenital disease of the skin, pachyonychia congenita, with a combination of suggestions during hypnosis and other psychotherapeutic measures. They directed their suggestions first to the left hand, and the first improvement in the patient's condition occurred there. Improvement occurred later in other affected parts of the skin.

Although burns are subsumed as injuries rather than illnesses, I will mention here a report by L. E. Moore and Kaplan (1983) of the successful acceleration of the healing of burns with hypnosis. They gave the suggestion that one side only of the body—both sides having burns of approximately equal extent—would show rapid healing. Four of 5 patients thus treated showed accelerated healing on the treated side; the fifth patient showed rapid healing on both sides.

RECURRENCE OF BODILY CHANGES DURING REMEMBRANCE OF A PHYSICAL INJURY

Different authors have reported, usually in single case reports or as incidental observations of another investigation, that when some persons have remembered an injury, or the circumstances connected with it, they have developed bodily changes that seemingly repeated the changes following the original injury. It is as if, in these cases, the body relives the injury as much as the mind does.

I once had under my care a patient who had the kind of experience I shall be describing in this section, although her bodily changes did not (like those of the other subjects I shall mention) derive from a physical injury. This patient, a young married woman, suffered from severe urticaria that occurred during periods of stress. By far the most difficult circumstance in her life at the time was the dominating influence of her mother-in-law in her relations with her husband. My patient regularly had attacks of urticaria when her mother-in-law came to visit her and her husband. She was so sensitive to her mother-in-law that she even had attacks of urticaria when she went to the mailbox and found there a letter from her mother-in-law. Sometimes, in my office, when she would remember unpleasant contacts with her mother-in-law, she would have an attack of urticaria as she talked to me about this dreaded person (Stevenson and Graham, 1963).

Some of the cases that I shall cite in this section occurred when patients spontaneously remembered some traumatic event of their earlier life. However, in most of them a therapist deliberately tried to induce the remembrance of such

events, either with hypnosis or with drugs, such as ether or lysergic acid diethylamide. It was formerly believed, and seems indeed to be true, that the revival of such memories had great therapeutic value. This derived, proponents of this form of psychotherapy said, from the expression of strong emotions that often accompanied the arousal of the memories (Grinker and Spiegel, 1945). In the therapeutic sessions that seemed most beneficial, the patient spoke in the present tense and seemed to be living again the previous occasion with the intensity it had at its original occurrence (Dane and Whitaker, 1952; Edkins, 1948). The patient's experience was sometimes called *abreaction*. I am not here concerned with whether the theories that seemed to justify this type of therapy, which has now largely passed out of fashion, had merit or not.[13] I am reviewing these cases here in order to show that the apparent reliving of past experiences has sometimes been accompanied by localized physical changes that resembled—seemed actually to reproduce—those that had accompanied the events remembered, or that might have accompanied them.

Bellis (1966) inadvertently produced a sunburnlike reaction in the skin of a woman to whom he gave the suggestion, during a procedure for hypnotic induction, that she imagine herself at a beach on a sunny day. Bellis had intended this suggestion to be a pleasant, relaxing one, but it was not. The skin of the patient's face, shoulders, and part of her arms became beet-red, itchy, and painful. She said that she felt as if she were on fire. The erythema lasted 18 hours; it extended over areas of her body that had been affected when, some time before, she had developed a severe rash after being exposed to the sun while taking a drug that had sensitized her skin to the sun's rays.

Agle, Ratnoff, and Wasman (1967) (whose work I shall describe in more detail later) evoked a somewhat similar reaction during the treatment of a patient who had the condition they described as autoerythrocyte sensitization, which, as I shall explain, appears to be a type of psychogenic purpura. The patient dated the onset of her symptoms to an industrial accident when her right foot had been contused (sufficiently for her to have been awarded compensation for the injury). On an occasion when this patient was under hypnosis she was given the suggestion of experiencing again the blow to her foot that had apparently led to her illness. Upon receiving this suggestion the patient felt pain in her right foot, and later in the day the foot swelled, although no bruise appeared.

Agle and Ratnoff (1962) studied another patient with psychogenic purpura whose husband used to beat her until she was bruised. Later, her sons grew up and prevented their father from beating their mother. However, he continued to abuse

[13]I do, however, believe that abreaction had merit and should still sometimes be used in psychotherapy. Its value derives from the integration of the memories of past events with other later experiences. The intense emotion expressed when the memories of earlier events are revived is an accompaniment of their recall and not a cause of any therapeutic benefit ensuing. Interested readers may find fuller information about this aspect of the revivication of memories in D. R. Davis (1958); McDougall (1926); and Stevenson et al. (1974).

his wife verbally, and when he did so she developed bruises. Agle and Ratnoff did not state that the patient's purpuric lesions provoked by verbal abuse were in the same sites as the bruises from her husband's physical blows had been, and so, with regard to the specific location of the bodily changes evoked by remembrance, this last case is not in the class of most of the others I have included in this section.

Johnson and Barber (1976) reported a relevant case in the report of their attempt to replicate earlier experiments in which suggestions given to hypnotized subjects had produced blisters in the skin. In my summary of their experiment I mentioned that they had not produced blisters in any of their 40 subjects and produced erythema in only one. However, in this particular subject, the area of induced erythema (an irregular region on the dorsum of the left hand) coincided (the subject stated) with the area of the same hand that she had burned with hot grease some 6 years earlier. In the experiment the subjects had been asked to imagine that they were cooking in a kitchen and that a hot frying pan burned them on the top of one hand. As Johnson and Barber pointed out, this suggestion led to the revival of the subject's memory of the closely similar experience that she had had. She then seemed to relive the experience both in mental imagery and in accompanying physical changes.[14]

Lifschutz (1957) described the case of a woman whose father, evidently a brutal man, had scratched her back severely with his fingernails when she was 13 years old. The scratching had been severe enough to have left three long scars on her back. Later, when the patient was 17, she separated from her father and tried to avoid him. However, he found out where she was living and, wishing to renew contact with his daughter, announced that he would pay her a visit. This news made the patient apprehensive. The scars on her back, which had been healed for 4 years, became reddened and bled. When the patient's father did visit her, he did not behave cruelly; nevertheless, the patient's fear of him persisted, and on several later occasions, when he proposed to visit her, the old scars again became reddened and bled.

Graff and Wallerstein (1954) reported the case of a patient who, during an interview reviewing stressful events of his earlier life, developed a wheal reaction in a tattoo that he had had put on the skin of his left arm about 6 years earlier. The area of the tattoo itched, and the skin tattooed became elevated about 2 millime-

[14]Podiapolskii (1909), whose (principal) experiment in producing blisters with hypnosis I described above, believed dogmatically that such experiments would only succeed with subjects who had previously had a blister from a real burn (not necessarily at the same site as the suggested burn). He described the case of a man in whom he suggested the redness of an imaginary mustard plaster. The experiment failed, and Podiapolskii attributed this to the subject's never having had a real mustard plaster applied to his chest. After a time, the patient developed a bronchial condition for which he was treated with a mustard plaster. Subsequently, Podiapolskii succeeded in inducing in this subject "severe burning and redness" on the chest by suggestion during hypnosis.

Weitzenhoffer (1953) similarly insisted that only persons who had previously experienced blisters from burns could develop blisters when given a suggestion to do so under hypnosis. However, he did not offer any evidence for his assertion.

ters above the surrounding skin. Graff and Wallerstein had a plaster cast made of the affected area, and the relief shown in the cast corresponded closely to the design of the tattoo. Graff and Wallerstein published photographs both of the tattoo and of the cast made of the wheal. Other tattoos the patient had did not become itchy and elevated. The wheal in the outline of the tattoo lasted about 24 hours. Two days later, it recurred during another interview in which the patient reviewed stresses in his life. Unfortunately, Graff and Wallerstein failed to learn about special circumstances in the patient's life at the time he had this particular tattoo put into his skin, or why he chose the design of the tattoo—a dagger having an elaborate handle and seemingly penetrating a fold of the skin. They saw sexual symbolism in the design of the tattoo and thought that the topics of therapeutic interviews with the patient had significantly touched on his sexual conflicts. Be that as it may, the case derives its importance here from the occurrence during interviews about life stresses of a wheal corresponding to the complicated design of a tattoo and restricted to the lines of this tattoo.

Moody (1946, 1948) published reports of several cases in which physical changes occurred during remembrance of previous injuries. He said that these remembrances had all occurred during "abreaction" or a period of "dissociation."

One of Moody's patients had been liable to attacks of somnambulism in some of which he had seemed likely to injure himself, or perhaps injure other persons. In 1935 he had had such an attack when in a hospital, and the staff had tied his arms behind his back with ropes. The patient had struggled against this restraint and had apparently suffered both physical and psychological traumata at the time. Many years later, in 1944 (when he was under Moody's care), he was still liable to attacks of somnambulism and seemed in one of these to be reliving the occasion in 1935 when he had been restrained. This was suggested by his walking for a time with his hands behind his back and making movements as if he was trying to free his hands from some imagined bond. Afterward, his arms were found to have on them deep wheals with a little subcutaneous bleeding. Two days later the wheals had disappeared. Moody then sedated the patient and encouraged him to recall in detail the episode of his being tied with his hands behind his back. He did this and tossed and turned violently with his hands behind his back. After only a few minutes of this apparent reliving of the episode wheals appeared on both forearms and gradually became indented; some petechial hemorrhages occurred along their course. After reliving the episode, the patient returned to a normal state and could then give an account of the episode of his having been restrained with ropes 9 years earlier. The indented wheals were still visible the following morning, and Moody had them photographed and included in the publication of his report. I referred earlier to "rope marks" that appeared on the wrists of three stigmatists who seemed to relive the Passion of Jesus (St. Veronica Giuliani, Marguerite du Saint-Sacrement, and Marie-Julie Jahenny), and I shall later describe several cases in which informants have told me that birthmarks on the subject of a case suggestive of reincarnation corresponded to rope marks on the person whose life the subject remembered. To bring Moody's case into rela-

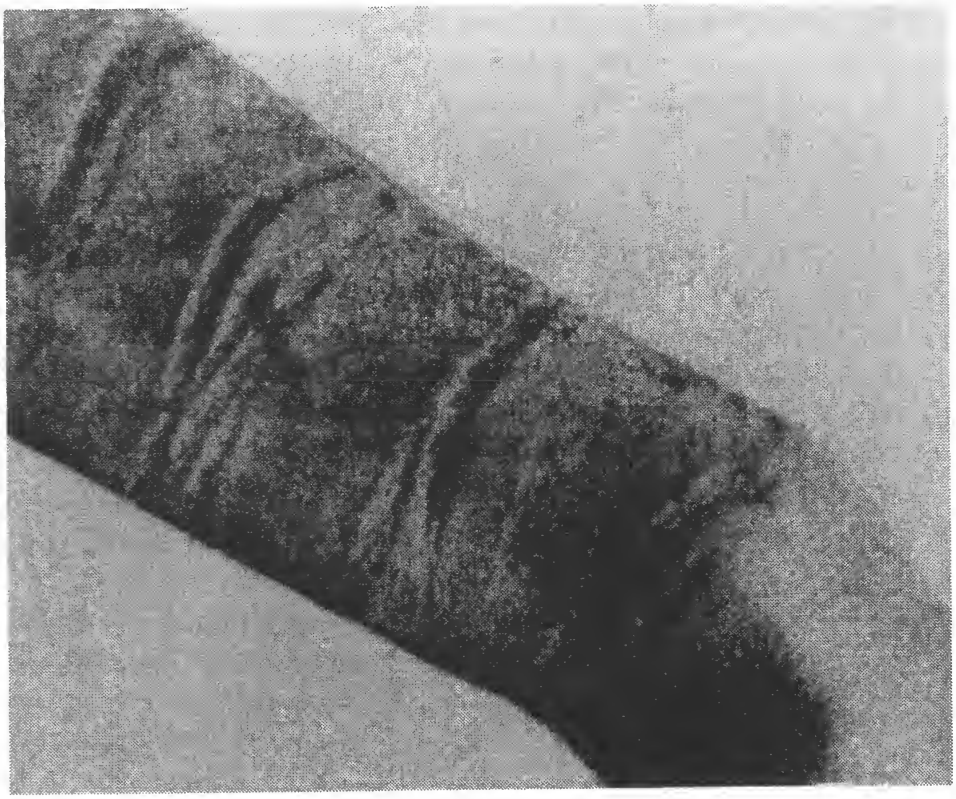

Figure 2-6 Wheals in the form of rope marks that developed after a patient relived an episode when he had had his arms tied behind his back 9 years earlier. In some of the depressed areas one can discern smaller patterns corresponding to the strands of which the binding rope was made. (Patient of Dr. R. L. Moody.) (From Moody, 1946.) (Courtesy of *The Lancet*.)

tion with these others, and also because of the question raised by the unusual pattern of the wheals in this case, I reproduce Moody's photograph of his patient's wheals (Figure 2-6).

Another of Moody's patients vividly remembered (during an abreaction) being injured when he had been buried after a bomb explosion during World War II. Afterward the patient's left ankle and forehead above the left orbit swelled up painfully; these had been the parts of his body injured when the bomb had exploded.

Moody also described a woman of 35 who recalled (also during an abreaction) a riding accident she had had at the age of 10, when she was said to have fractured some ribs on her right side. As she recalled this incident, she developed petechial hemorrhages and bruising in the line of the 10th rib on the right side.

Moody (1948) studied a fourth patient, a woman whose father had repeatedly beaten her when she was a child. She had also had several accidents. Moody observed bodily changes on at least 30 occasions when this patient relived traumatic events of her earlier life. The remembrance of an accident when the patient had fractured her wrist was followed by swelling and hyperemia of the wrist. When the patient recalled having been struck on her left shoulder (during a beating) with a whip, she developed linear marks of redness in the skin within 20 min-

Figure 2-7 Area of erythema, swelling, and bleeding that developed after a patient recalled during abreaction that her father had struck her on the shoulder when he was beating her with a whip (many years earlier). (Patient of Dr. R. L. Moody.) (From Edkins, 1948.) (Courtesy of Harper and Row.)

utes. A bandage was placed over this area, and the next morning the bandage was found bloodstained. Moody had the wound that developed on this occasion photographed (Figure 2-7). On a third occasion this same patient remembered an incident when her father had struck her on the arm with a stick. The patient's arm—at the site of the blow—became first hyperemic and then bruised and swollen. Moody noted a strange pattern in the edematous skin over this bruise. Later, the patient told him that for the beating that she had been remembering just before this lesion appeared, her father had used a stick that was elaborately carved. It appears that the pattern of the carving on the stick had been reproduced on the patient's skin when she remembered the incident.[15]

[15]Forensic pathologists know that weapons used in assaults and fatal beatings may leave patterns on the skin of a victim that correspond to markings on the weapon. Simpson (1978a, opp. p. 61) published a photograph of an elongated bruise on a dead woman that showed a fine pattern corresponding exactly to the pattern of a diagonal-weave leather whip (also shown in the photograph) that was found among the suspected murderer's belongings. The similarity between the pattern on the victim's skin and the pattern of the whip provided an important clue to the identification of the murderer, who had used the whip in sadistic beatings of women. In another work Simpson (1978b, pp. 28-29) published other photographs showing clear patterns left on skin in one case by a plaited rope used to make a noose around the neck and in another by a string glove worn by an assailant who struck his victim on the face.

Moody once demonstrated the occurrence of bodily changes in this patient in the presence of a colleague. The patient recalled an occasion when her father had beaten her across the dorsum of her hands with a cutting whip. Within a few minutes red streaks became visible on the backs of the patient's hands. The right hand was then bandaged and encased in a plaster bandage which remained intact until the patient was examined the following morning. The removed bandage showed bloodstains.

Edkins (1948) reported another instance of physical changes during the remembrance of an injury. The patient was an army officer who had injured his left wrist and fractured a finger of the left hand during a parachute jump. When, 4 years later, he abreacted this incident—assisted by an anesthetic—the temperature of the fingers of the left hand fell by 3° centigrade (on average) compared with the fingers of the right hand. (The temperature changes were measured with an electrical thermometer.)

I have not myself seen a case comparable to any of those described by Moody, and they are sufficiently unusual to cause initial incredulity. However, colleague psychiatrists have sent me reports of two similar cases that they observed directly.

Dr. P. H. Henning sent me (in 1962) an account of a case that had come under his observation at the Sterkfontein Hospital in Krugersdorp, Republic of South Africa. I quote the following from his letter (of April 11, 1962) to me:

> This patient had first been admitted to this hospital during 1953 when he was only 16 years of age. His main complaint was that since the age of 13 years he could not resist from using foul language in public, e.g., in church, in presence of distinguished visitors at home etc....
>
> ...it was concluded that this must be a case of coprolalia (Gilles de la Tourette disease)....he had been treated by private psychiatrists by various methods...without any improvement.
>
> In hospital hypnotherapy was attempted. During one of the hypnotic sessions our patient released the following information to his therapist: "The worst hiding I got because of swearing was given by my father during October 1952. I swore...and my father became very cross with me....He took me to a bedroom and locked us in. He was in a terrible state. He hit me for about three minutes, using a belt. It was about 1½ inches wide and ⅛ inch thick. The marks were noticeable on my buttocks for approximately three weeks afterwards. At first these were blue and later on green....
>
> This must be the occasion after which it had been reported by the nursing staff that the patient developed wheals over the buttocks as if someone had given him a severe hiding. Unluckily, no mention of this had been made in the doctors' files and the nursing reports cannot be traced....

Professor Lewis Hurst, in a letter of July 26, 1986, to me, corroborated Dr. Henning's account of the case. He wrote:

> I well remember the case you refer to in your letter. It was at Sterkfontein Hospital, of which I was Physician Superintendent and Clinical Head at the time and Dr. P. H. Henning a psychiatrist on my staff. We studied the case together, and I well remember being called to the ward to witness the wheals that appeared on the buttocks of the patient when regressed under hypnosis to the age that his father administered the thrashing.

The second of these cases occurred in the practice of the late Dr. T. M. Ling of London. It occurred during a psychotherapeutic session using lysergic acid diethylamide (LSD). Dr. Ling wrote me about the case in a letter of October 13, 1964:

> Eighteen months ago I was treating a German lady who had a very disturbed childhood and who relived a beating vividly. This was followed the same evening by the appearance of about eight marks on her buttocks such as one would expect with a cane.
>
> The lady in question has since gone back to Germany, much improved but no photographs were taken of these marks.

I wanted to be sure that Dr. Ling had himself observed the marks on the patient and wrote to ask him about this. In a letter dated November 3, 1964, he replied:

> I recollect seeing the marks on the buttocks of the woman, which certainly appeared as though she had just been caned.
>
> This occurred during the evening session, which started at 6:30 p.m., and she was conscious enough to tell me about her experiences at ll o'clock, at which time I saw the marks.

OTHER PHYSICAL CHANGES CORRESPONDING TO MENTAL IMAGES

In the preceding sections of this chapter I have described bodily changes that corresponded to mental images that, in turn, corresponded to an image that was verifiable, although not necessarily verified. Such an image might be a representation of the crucifixion of Jesus, a suggestion of being burned (evoking a memory of an actual burn), or a memory of some real past physical injury. I shall now describe some cases in which bodily changes occurred that corresponded to mental images that were not even verifiable in principle. They corresponded to nothing having an objective source.

My first example of this phenomenon comes from the case of Eleonore Zugun, who was the focus of fairly typical poltergeist disturbances during her early teens. Objects were seen to move in her presence under conditions that satisfied observers (at least some of the time) that Eleonore could not have produced

the movements by normal means. In addition, Eleonore's skin showed the sudden appearance of lesions resembling the punctures and scratches of needles and the marks left by bites from teeth. These marks appeared at times when Eleonore was in full view of observers who were able to certify that she had not produced them normally. The teeth-marks were the most impressive of these appearances on the skin because of the complexity of their form.

> Then there appeared suddenly on her hands and forearms marks, which one could recognize only as bites. There were sharp teeth-marks, completely and unmistakably recognizable as such, exactly as though she [Eleonore] had been bitten by somebody. There would be from six to nine teeth above and below, the size of the oval varying, just as though this hypothetical mouth had been more or less widely open. These teeth-marks were first visible as heavy red depressions in Eleonore's skin; later they would get quite as thick and as white as the scratches which had preceded them. There even came, on the left forearm which I held, six bites at once, alongside one another. (Wassilko-Serecki, 1926, p. 595)

Eleonore attributed the scratches and bites to *dracu* (Rumanian for "the devil"), and the teeth-marks presumably corresponded to her idea of dracu's bite.

During a series of experiments with Eleonore Zugun conducted in Berlin, the experimenters covered the areas of Eleonore's skin where the bites and other skin marks most frequently occurred with a thick layer of rouge. The scratches and bites then appeared on the rouge as well as the skin. Wassilko[-Serecki] (1928) interpreted this result as evidence that the marks on the skin did not originate interiorly (for example, as we may suppose stigmata and bodily changes during abreactions do) but exteriorly. If this explanation is correct, the teeth-marks belong with psychokinetic phenomena and not with the other cases described in this chapter.

Two subjects in India who nearly died and recovered said that during the period when they were ostensibly dead they seemed to have gone to some other realm where they had suffered some injury; marks corresponding to these claimed injuries were seen on their bodies after they regained consciousness. Dr. Satwant Pasricha and Dr. Nicholas McClean-Rice examined the scar that one of these subjects (Mangal Singh) said derived from his having been burned while he was briefly in the realm of the dead (Pasricha and Stevenson, 1986). As I myself interviewed and examined the other of these two subjects, I shall describe his case more fully.

THE CASE OF DURGA JATAV

Durga Jatav was born in the village of Saidpur, in the Agra District of Uttar Pradesh, India, in about 1930. Dr. Pasricha met him in 1979, and I met him (with Dr. Pasricha) in 1980.

When Durga Jatav was in his late teens (he could not remember exactly how old he had been at the time), he unexpectedly nearly died. According to Durga's older sister (whom we interviewed), he had had typhoid fever. He was ill for about 2 weeks. He became delirious and then seemed to die; his body became cold for 1 or 2 hours before he revived. Durga claimed to remember vividly experiences that occurred during the period when he seemed to be almost dead or apparently dead. His account of these experiences closely resembled accounts given by other persons in India who have also nearly died and recovered.

In Indian cases of this type the person often describes being taken in hand by messengers (Yamdoots) of the King of Death (Yamraj) and says that these men took the person to a kind of tribunal or courtroom where his or her record (of good and bad deeds) was consulted. But the person says (after reviving) that the "registrars" found an error in the identity of the person being taken to die, and so he or she is sent back and allowed to go on living. The person then revives and tells his or her relatives why he or she was "sent back" (Pasricha, 1995; Pasricha and Stevenson, 1986).

Durga Jatav's experience conformed to this type, with the addition that (in the realm in which he found himself) he struggled with the messengers so much that they cut off his legs at the knees in order to subdue and control him. Later, when he was sent back from the realm to which he had been taken by mistake, his legs had to be put back and reattached at the knees. When Durga Jatav revived, he was found to have some unusual horizontal scars in the skin across the front of both knees. We examined and photographed these scars (Figure 2-8). Durga's older sister testified that she had been with her brother during his illness and had observed the unusual scar formations on his skin a few days after his recovery.

We arranged to have Durga Jatav's knees x-rayed, and no abnormality of his bony structures was found.

This case differs from those of the preceding section in that Durga's physical marks persisted instead of disappearing with the passage of time.[16]

Persons have sometimes awakened from dreams and found that their body had some physical change, such as a bruise, that corresponded to an event in a dream, such as a beating.

A typical case of this type is that of Bishop Lawrence, which occurred in the 7th century A.D. in England. Persecuted by the Kings of Essex and Kent, Lawrence

[16]Bede (737/1975) published a parallel case. It is that of Fursey, a saintly man who fell ill, almost died, and recovered. During his illness he had a vision of heaven and hell. During the vision a man burning in the fires of hell came into contact with Fursey and burned him on the shoulder and jaw. Bede wrote:

> Being afterward restored to his body, throughout the whole course of his life he bore the mark of the fire, which he had felt in his soul, visible to all men on his shoulder and jaw; and the flesh publicly showed, in a wonderful manner, what his soul had suffered in private. (p.135)

Figure 2-8 Knees of Durga Jatav showing linear scars across the skin over the knees. The scars were said to be residues of amputation at the knees in a postmortem realm from which Durga Jatav was sent back after restoration of his legs.

was on the point of abandoning his Christianizing mission and returning to Gaul. At this juncture he dreamed that St. Peter appeared to him, rebuked him for forsaking the people entrusted to his care, and scourged him (with what instrument we are not told). In the morning Lawrence had prominent stripes on his body from the scourging while he slept. He showed these stripes to the King of Kent, Eadbald, who was so deeply impressed that he became converted to Christianity (A. J. Mason, 1897).

History (or a legend) recounts that in the 8th century the Archangel Michael appeared in a dream (or vision) to Bishop Aubert of Avranches (Normandy) and instructed him to construct a chapel in his honor on the island now called Mont Saint-Michel (Gout, 1910). Aubert hesitated to follow this suggestion and continued to temporize even after Michael appeared to him a second time and repeated his instruction. Michael then appeared a third time, and this time pressed his finger on the bishop's head leaving a permanent defect in his skull. Aubert, finally persuaded, then erected the beginning of the great abbey of Mont Saint-Michel. His skull, with its defect obvious, is exhibited in the Basilique St-Gervais at Avranches. (On my only visit to Avranches the treasury of the Basilique was closed, and so I was unable to examine the skull. However, I cannot doubt its existence, because Gout [1910] published a photograph of the skull that clearly shows a large hole in the right parietal region.)

THE FEATURES THAT PHYSICAL CHANGES CORRESPONDING TO MENTAL IMAGES HAVE IN COMMON

Stigmata, blisters produced by suggestion, and wheals or swellings repeating old injuries: Do these have features in common? It would be rash to insist that they all do, but I think that we can discern certain elements that recur often among these experiences. Contributions of all these features may be essential for the occurrence of the bodily changes observed. The variety of the experiences and accompanying physical changes may derive from the differing proportions of the same ingredients in different subjects. This suggestion should become clearer after I have given some examples of the mixtures.

I shall consider the following different features of the experiences: the type of image or remembered experience; the concentration of attention on the images, whether externally visible, suggested, or remembered; the psychophysical connections that facilitate bodily changes; the susceptibility of the tissues, especially of the skin, to disruption; and the processes in the production of bodily changes that are localized to a particular small region and have an unusual form.

The Type of Experiences Figuring in the Pertinent Images

Nearly all the primary experiences that figure in these bodily changes involve intense physical suffering, usually with severe pain. This is obviously true of the contusions from accidents and wheals from beatings that were noted in most of the bodily changes induced by remembering a past injury. Also, most but not quite all, of the cases of blisters induced by suggestion involved the idea of physical pain. Nearly all the hypnotists of these experiments suggested in one way or another that the subject would feel pain as the subject was, in imagination, "burned." Even when the hypnotist did not specifically mention pain, the unembellished suggestion that one was going to apply a hot object to the skin would suffice to evoke an expectation and feeling of pain.

We have also seen that when an experimenter blocks the experience of pain with suggestion the local reaction to an actual burn is less than when the subject experiences pain. One can interpret these experiments as showing the influence of pain felt at the site of the burn on the magnitude of the inflammatory reaction. However, the effect may also have been mediated by a change in the mental image that the subject would have of a burn associated with pain compared with one that was not. The subjects would tend to believe that the burn accompanied by pain must have been more severe than the one unaccompanied by pain. The suggestion of pain may only facilitate the development of the local physical changes by adding to the plausibility and hence to the vividness of the experience that the subject is to imagine he or she is having.

In most reports of stigmatists the feature of pain has received less attention than the visible wounds on the hands, feet, or elsewhere. Nevertheless, even a casual reading of statements the stigmatists themselves have made shows that they

often, if not always, suffered extreme pain at the sites of their stigmata. This is in fact what most of them craved; they prayed to suffer just as Jesus had suffered when he was crucified. One might almost say that the occurrence of the local wounds was an incidental, and by no means always welcome, by-product of the stigmatist's identification with the pain and other suffering of Jesus.

The Concentration of Attention on the Images

In reviewing cases of stigmata I drew attention to the *long* duration of fixed attention that the saintly stigmatists had given to the images of Jesus before which most of them had prayed. I hinted that ordinary persons, if they could be extraordinary in the time that they would give to concentrating their thoughts in this way, could produce bodily changes in themselves. However, many of the stigmatists who were not saints did not focus their attention for long on the Passion of Jesus. Although usually pious in their way, they were far from having the singleminded, prolonged preoccupation with Jesus' sufferings that, for example, St. Francis of Assisi showed.

These stigmatists must, therefore, have been extraordinary in some other respect. I suggest that they were persons who somehow became able to concentrate and intensify their mental images so that they produced in a short time the physical changes that it took much longer for other stigmatists to produce. Many of the stigmatists who were not saints could be, and often were, characterized as hysterics. Hysterics, whatever else they may be, are more suggestible than the average person. When asked what I mean by "suggestible," I reply that it is the ability to accept and hold a particular image intensely and unwaveringly. I have already referred to Lechler's definition of this quality with the word *impressionability*. Sights that other persons might ignore or pass over lightly become somehow fixed in the minds of these persons. Matko (1933), to whose descriptions of two nonsaintly stigmatists in Yugoslavia I referred above, wrote that the characteristics of stigmatists include "the ability to concentrate thoughts." The ordinary person does not have this gift—or this failing, some might say; his or her thoughts usually jostle each other aside in an almost continuous tumble.

We have other evidence of the importance of being able to concentrate fixedly on a mental image in order for bodily changes to occur. Willard (1977) addressed this question in his study of breast enlargement induced by visual imagery and hypnosis. His subjects had an initial session during which a hypnotic procedure was used, and they were instructed in progressive relaxation, which they were to practice at home. They were, when relaxed at home, to imagine their breasts covered with a wet, warm towel and perhaps further warmed with a heat lamp; they were to further imagine a pulsation in their breasts. Willard found that "the subjects who were able to obtain visual imagery, quickly, easily and a large percent of the time that they had attempted it, had the greatest increase in the mass or size of their breasts"(p. 197).

However, the most impressive evidence of the relationship between concentration on mental images and bodily changes comes from experiments with hyp-

nosis. The procedures of hypnosis use suggestions to concentrate the subject's attention on the particular images the hypnotist suggests to the subject. Other images are kept out of the subject's field of consciousness while he or she concentrates exclusively on the image or images suggested. Different investigators have defined hypnosis in various ways, but I think they have all emphasized the importance of the *concentrated attention* to a single idea of which the subject becomes capable in hypnosis. Braid (1855) coined the word *monoideism* for this condition. Referring to blisters produced by hypnotic suggestion, Alrutz (1915) wrote: "During hypnosis the attention becomes withdrawn from the external world and directed with full intensity on a single idea" (p. 9; my translation). Later students of hypnotic phenomena have made similar comments about the importance of concentrated attention. For example, Arnold (1946) stated that "hypnosis consists in concentrating and therefore intensifying the subject's imaginative process" (p. 116). Shor (1959, 1962, 1970) and Spanos and Barber (1974) have expressed similar views. Barber and his colleagues have conducted investigations that have shown a close connection between what Spanos and Barber (1974) called "involved imagining" and performance during hypnosis. I think that "involved imagining" corresponds to the "monoideism" of Braid and to what I call "concentrated attention." All these terms refer to the ability to focus on one image or set of images to the exclusion of all others. Indeed, Spanos and Barber stated that no other measurable feature of personality correlates so well with performance during hypnosis as indications of a capacity for involved imagining.

The next pertinent question is that of whether the procedure of inducing hypnosis is essential for the occurrence of the phenomena observed during the condition known as hypnosis. Sinclair-Gieben and Chalmers (1959), in their treatment of warts with suggestion to which I referred earlier, observed that warts regressed in 9 of 10 patients whom they regarded as deeply hypnotizable, but in none of 4 patients whom they found to be only lightly hypnotizable. Asher (1956) similarly observed greater improvement in the regression of warts induced with suggestion in patients he judged to be "good hypnotic subjects" (65% of whom were cured) compared with those he judged "poor hypnotic subjects" (none of whom were cured). Of an intermediate group judged "fair hypnotic subjects" 50% were cured. Johnson and Barber (1978) divided a group of patients with warts into 2 groups of 11 patients each. One group was put through a standard procedure for inducing hypnosis, whereas the members of the other group were briefly instructed in a sort of pseudo-procedure that was presented to them as "focused contemplation." Both groups received similar suggestions concerning the disappearance of their warts by the methods employed. At the time of the follow-up session, about 6 weeks later, 3 of the 11 subjects who had been given the hypnotic induction and none of the 11 subjects in the group assigned to "focused contemplation" showed wart regression.

Studies of the type I have just cited suggest that the procedure of hypnotic induction at least facilitates in some persons the occurrence of bodily changes in relation to mental images. But is a hypnotic procedure necessary? And if it is not

necessary, but does sometimes facilitate bodily changes, how does it do this? A negative answer to the first question is suggested by the experiments (mentioned earlier) of Ikemi and Nakagawa (1962), who studied the effects of suggestion on the reaction to poisonous and nonpoisonous leaves applied to their subjects' skins. They used a hypnotic induction procedure with 5 students, but not with another 8 students who were simply blindfolded while the suggestions were being given and the leaves applied to their skin. Ikemi and Nakagawa found that the two groups of subjects responded equally, and this was true both when they were told that they were being touched with the poisonous leaves (when they were not) and when they were told that they were being touched with nonpoisonous leaves (when they were actually touched with the poisonous leaves). From considering these and other experiments Barber (1978) concluded that a hypnotic induction procedure, when it facilitates a bodily response (or any other response elicited in a hypnotized subject), does so because it somehow enhances the concentration of the subject on the task at hand. Hypnosis and hypnotists have acquired a certain amount of prestige, and some persons respond readily to suggestions that someone identified as a hypnotist makes in the context of a hypnotic induction procedure. For these persons the procedure of hypnotic suggestion is a powerful suggestion by itself, and it may enhance compliance with other suggestions. For persons who believe that they cannot achieve a state of concentrated attention without the ritual of a hypnotic induction procedure such a procedure is necessary; but it may not be for other persons (Barber, 1978).

Concentrated attention is more than a simple matter of altered motivation or social adaptation. Some real alteration in the persons affected occurs. To confuse the routes by which this alteration is reached with the new condition itself would be a mistake comparable to that of confusing sleep with the various circumstances—fatigue, boring lectures, and sedative drugs—that can induce it.

I am trying to identify the state of concentrated attention in a variety of conditions to which different authors have applied different names. *Absorption* is one of these names. Tellegen and Atkinson (1974) obtained data indicating that absorption, by which is meant the ability to give exclusive attention to an object in consciousness, is an important feature of hypnotic susceptibility and hence of hypnosis itself. Moody (1946, 1948) applied the words *dissociation* and *abreaction* to the states of his patients who were apparently reliving traumatic events of their past. Still other authors may apply the words *trance* or *ecstasy* to states of mind having the feature of concentrated attention. For example, Schwarz (1960) described the ability of some members of the Free Pentecostal Holiness Church in Appalachia to avoid bodily harm while exposed to hot flames and other hot objects, provided they are in a particular state of ecstasy; to this condition Schwarz applied the word *trance*, and he described two instances in which practitioners of the religious rites associated with immunity to fire touched hot objects when not in trance and were badly burned. Similarly, the legend to a photograph of a Turkish dervish (c. 1900) with a skewer through both cheeks describes him as "in a trance" (Wheatcroft, 1993, Figure 43).

I am far from being able to describe the mental state that induces immunity to fire in the Pentecostalists or freedom from bodily damage in the dervishes. I think however, it must include the feature of concentrated attention. We cannot say—or at least I cannot say—toward what the attention of these extraordinary persons is concentrated. Nevertheless, we can say that it is held away from the ideas of pain, suffering, and bodily damage. To that extent the Pentecostalists and dervishes put themselves into a state comparable with that of Delboeuf's (1887) subject (and the subjects of other experimenters) who were told that they would not feel any pain when they were burned.

Physiological Factors That May Facilitate Bodily Changes

Between the mental images and the peripheral tissues, mainly skin, that undergo changes corresponding to the images are interposed the central and autonomic nervous systems, blood vessels, and other tissues. Any inventory of factors involved in the processes I am considering must allow for a physiological component or more than one. We have little data to warrant speculation about such factors, but I will briefly mention some observations that seem pertinent, dividing these between the nervous system and the blood vessels.

Possible Factors of the Central and Autonomic Nervous Systems. In discussing earlier the effects of suggestion on the heart rate I drew attention to the existence of a few persons who can voluntarily accelerate and decelerate their heart rates. Persons have also been found who have voluntary control over other visceral functions that are ordinarily regarded as not under such control. For example, Rosen, Shapiro, and Schwartz (1975) identified a number of men who could produce a large degree of penile tumescence on being simply asked to do so. Hadfield (1920) and Luria (1969) reported the cases of persons who could voluntarily alter the temperature of part of their body. Hadfield's patient changed her body temperature upon his suggesting this to her; but she then seemed to be in a normal mental state and had not been hypnotized. Luria's subject raised the temperature of his right hand by imagining that it was on a hot stove; and he lowered that of his left hand by imagining that he was holding a piece of ice in it.[17]

Some persons may have circuitry in their central nervous systems that results in their undergoing peripheral bodily changes during stress more readily than other persons. The bodies of some persons seem to express what is in their minds more speedily and to a greater extent than those of other persons. However, we have an insufficient basis for any conjectures about what the relevant differences in the nervous systems of different persons may be.

[17]In considering examples to illustrate voluntary control of visceral functions I am not here including reports of persons who have attained such control by training themselves, whether through yoga, biofeedback techniques, or otherwise (Benson et al., 1982). For the present topic I wish only to emphasize that certain persons seem to have such voluntary control constitutionally, so to speak, and without any efforts on their part to augment the control.

Unusual Reactivity of the Blood Vessels of the Skin. Because most of the bodily changes I have been discussing affected the skin only, or the skin mainly, it is natural to suppose that some unusual susceptibility of the blood vessels of the skin, such that they readily exude fluid, may contribute to the changes observed or even be required for these to occur. I noted earlier that some few patients in whom blisters were produced by hypnotic suggestion had histories of unusual reactions in their skins, although most did not. In the present section I shall summarize some observations, mainly about psychosomatic disorders of the skin, that may bear on the occurrence of stigmata and perhaps some of the other changes in the skin related to mental images that I have described.

T. Lewis (1924, 1927) found that firm stroking of the skin leads to a detectable swelling of the skin in 25% of young, healthy persons and produces a conspicuous wheal in 5%. With more sensitive persons one can make strokes on their skin in the shape of letters, and "writing" will appear in the form of wheals; hence the terms *autographism* and *dermographism* for this phenomenon, which was first investigated systematically in the late 19th century (Delboeuf, 1892; Dujardin-Beaumetz, 1879; Mesnet, 1890).

Certain persons react to stress with urticaria, and I earlier described this condition in a patient I observed closely. Numerous cases of urticaria induced by strong emotion have been reported in the medical literature (Borelli, 1953; Graham and Wolf, 1950; Kreibich and Sobotka, 1909; Pistiner, Pitlik, and Rosenfeld, 1979).

Janet (1926) believed that stigmata occurred more readily in his patient Madeleine just before her menstrual periods or at other times when changes in the blood vessels of her skin made them susceptible to the effects of small traumatisms, which he thought Madeleine might have made herself without being aware that she was doing so. Variations in the circulation of the skin may play a part in cases of stigmatism that are more definitely of psychosomatic origin than that of Madeleine.

Physicians of the 19th and early 20th centuries often observed and sometimes reported cases of spontaneous bleeding into the skin and tissues beneath it. They labelled the disorder "psychogenic purpura." We are now unable to say whether the early patients diagnosed as having "psychogenic purpura" did or did not have some disorder, either of hemostasis or of the blood vessels, that became manifest during stresses; but this seems likely.

In 1955 Gardner and Diamond reported the occurrence of frequent attacks of purpura and sometimes internal bleeding in four women who had had injuries. They inferred that following the injuries the women had become sensitive to their own extravasated erythrocytes, and they supported this interpretation by showing that the women developed ecchymotic lesions at the sites where they injected a patient's own erythrocytes intradermally. They did not investigate possible psychological factors in this disorder. They did demonstrate, however, that these patients had no defects of hemostasis. They called the syndrome "autoerythrocyte sensitization."

A few years later, Ratnoff and Agle reported observations bearing on the psychogenic nature of the purpura described by Gardner and Diamond. They studied a group of 9 female patients having symptoms of purpura conforming to the description of Gardner and Diamond. They repeated Gardner and Diamond's test of injecting the patient's own erythrocytes intradermally and producing ecchymoses thereby. However, they found that 3 patients developed similar ecchymoses when they injected saline intradermally. Furthermore, 3 of their patients said that they had had attacks of purpura during periods of emotional distress. These observations led Ratnoff and Agle to conduct thorough psychological evaluations of their patients. They found that the purpuric attacks were frequently precipitated by some stress in the patients' lives (Agle and Ratnoff, 1962; Ratnoff and Agle, 1961).[18] They added to the evidence of a psychological factor by inducing with hypnosis (in 4 patients) ecchymotic lesions at specific sites indicated by the hypnotist (Agle, Ratnoff, and Wasman, 1967). Ratnoff (1969) suggested that these observations may show at least part of the physiological process whereby stigmata occur, although, so far as I know, no patient with psychogenic purpura (or autoerythrocyte sensitization) has developed open wounds such as are found in more fully developed stigmata.

Summary of the Requirements for the Expression of Mental Images in the Skin

I will now offer a summary of the requirements for the representation of mental imagery in the skin with the following formula:

$$CA + DI + PF = CS$$

In this equation CA stands for Concentrated Attention or Absorption; DI stands for Duration of Imagery, PF stands for a hypothetical Physiological Factor, perhaps in the central or autonomic nervous system, perhaps vascular; and CS stands for the Changes in the Skin. Hypnosis and strong emotions (as in the vivid reliving of traumatic events) may increase concentration of attention. Where concentrated attention has these aids, the duration of imagery required to produce bodily changes may be brief; where they are missing, as perhaps they are in most saintly stigmatists, the Duration of Imagery (DI) must be proportionately long for a physical effect to occur.

Like many other simple formulae, this one may not adequately take account of all relevant factors. A troublesome question about some stigmatics is that of why their wounds remained open for years while they were engaged more or less in normal activities. One might expect that when they were not concentrating on the Passion of Jesus their wounds would have healed up, and the wounds did close

[18]Mitchell (1869) had much earlier observed a correlation between stress and attacks of purpura; he had suggested that at least some forms of purpura might be what we now call psychosomatic.

periodically in some stigmatics and permanently in others. One is obliged to conjecture that stigmatists whose wounds do not heal somehow manage to "instruct" subconscious levels of their minds to maintain the wounds once they have developed. Perhaps parallel cases occurred in the studies of Forel (1902) and others (which I mentioned earlier) who successfully set dates for the beginning of menstruation with a posthypnotic suggestion. Posthypnotic suggestions have been correctly carried out months and even a year (Liégeois, 1889) after the date of the original instruction to the subject.

In this chapter I have presented evidence showing that under certain circumstances representations of mental images occur in the skin. The evidence also shows that the circumstances nearly always include intense mental concentration, either in perception or in memory, on some event fraught with physical suffering.

Before concluding the chapter I wish to emphasize the importance of the restricted locations and the unusual patterns that are involved in the bodily representation of mental images.

Bodily Representations of Mental Imagery in Restricted Locations

In an earlier section of this chapter I mentioned Pattie's (1941) skepticism concerning hypnotically induced blisters, which skepticism derived from his inability to understand how known physiological processes could produce such blisters. He wrote that he could not:

> ...understand by what physiological processes suggestion—or the central nervous system—could produce *localized and circumscribed* erythemas or blisters. The results of actual thermal or mechanical stimulation of the skin are due (l) to an increase in the permeability of the walls of the capillaries and a consequent exudation of fluid and (2) to dilatation of the arterioles. The first effect is caused by a local liberation of histamine (or a similar substance) in the injured tissues. The second effect is due to axon reflexes. Both of these processes are independent of the central nervous system. (Pattie, 1941, p. 71; Pattie's italics)

After the above passage, Pattie considered the possibility that antidromic impulses might somehow be in play in the occurrence of hypnotically induced blisters; but he rejected this idea for lack of evidence.

Since Pattie's publication, later investigations have produced little clarification of the processes Pattie wished to understand. Experiments that A. A. Mason (1960a) and later Black, Humphrey, and Niven (1963) conducted contributed some useful information. Using direct suggestions to subjects under hypnosis, they were able to inhibit the skin response to tuberculin (Mantoux test) in persons known to be ordinarily sensitive to tuberculin. Histological examination of the sites injected with tuberculin showed that the suggested inhibition did not reduce

the usual cellular infiltration of the injected site; but it did alter the extent of fluid exudation into the site. These observations point to a vascular component, at least in this particular response to hypnosis. G. R. Smith and McDaniel (1983) produced a similar localized inhibition of the skin response to tuberculin by a conditioning procedure instead of hypnosis.

It is important to note that Locke et al. (1994), using a different antigen (varicella-zoster) in a carefully controlled study, were unable to demonstrate an ability of hypnotized subjects to alter their response to the antigen used in the conditions of their experiment. They also provided a critical review of published reports of this type of experiment.

Unusual Patterns in Bodily Changes Related to Mental Images

Cases in which the bodily changes corresponding with mental images have occurred in an unusual pattern pose a formidable difficulty for attempts to explain them with known processes of the central and autonomic nervous systems. We do not have many cases of this type, but there have been a few that we cannot arbitrarily set aside. I am thinking of the reproduction in the skin of such forms as those of letters (Jendrássik's, Mabille's, and Smirnoff's experiments), marks left by ropes and whips (Moody's patients), three-cornered wounds like those of thorns (Lechler's patient), and a complicated pattern of a tattoo (Graff and Wallerstein's patient). We can suppose that the subjects of these phenomena all had somewhere a memory of the form reproduced. But where was the memory? If in the brain alone, we have no understanding of how the brain could instruct local blood vessels and other tissues to represent the various forms in the skin.

Many of the reports of cases suggestive of reincarnation, to which this and the next chapter are introductory, show similar correspondences in details between birthmarks (or birth defects) and wounds or other marks on the deceased persons whose lives the subjects of such cases claimed to remember. However, before we come to them I wish to prepare my readers further by reviewing evidence that a living person can influence the body of another living person by some paranormal process. This is the topic of the next chapter.

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3

Bodily Changes Corresponding to Another Person's Mental Images

Passing now to bodily changes corresponding to another person's mental images, I shall divide this topic into two main sections: apparent physical effects of one person's mental images on another living person; and apparent physical effects of a pregnant mother's mental images on her embryo or fetus. For both groups I shall consider only effects that seem to occur without any identifiable physical communication or other recognized physical process.

BODILY CHANGES CORRESPONDING TO ANOTHER PERSON'S PHYSICAL CONDITION

Spontaneous Cases

In cases of what I call telepathic impressions the percipient becomes aware of some event occurring at a distance and not inferrable from normally available information. In cases of this group the percipient has no visual image of the distant scene, although in some cases of the type an image may occur at a later stage of the experience, after the initial imageless impression. The percipient identifies the principal person involved in the distant event, and this is usually someone to whom the percipient is closely attached and who is in some serious trouble, such as from a grave illness or injury. Sometimes the percipient obtains a few additional details of information about the person in trouble (the agent), such as that he or

she has been admitted to a hospital or has driven a car into a ditch. In order for a paranormal process to be considered likely the case should fulfill two requirements. First, the event happening to the agent must be an unusual one or one that has rarely if ever happened before to the agent; this reduces the likelihood of a chance coincidence between the impression and the event. Second, the percipient should never before have claimed that such an event was happening to the agent; this rule eliminates persons who give frequent monitions and occasionally turn out to be correct. I reviewed and analyzed 160 cases of this type that had been previously published and then reported 35 new cases that I had investigated myself (Stevenson, 1970b).

In some cases of telepathic impressions the percipient experiences pain or other physical symptoms that correspond in bodily location to an unexpected symptom, usually pain, that the agent was experiencing at (or almost at) the same time. Such cases are not common (among telepathic impressions reported and investigated), and pain figured in only 4 of the 160 published cases that I analyzed. However, cases of this type (and with other localized physical symptoms) pertain to the cases with which I am mainly concerned in this book. The following is a fairly typical example of a telepathic impression characterized by pain.

The percipient of this case was Mrs. Joicey Hurth, who sent me an account of her experience in a letter dated May 24, 1967. She was busy in the kitchen of her house one morning when she unexpectedly felt "a sharp pain on the lower side of my right leg and buttocks." Mrs. Hurth remembered later that although she was alone, she said "Oh" aloud, and rubbed the area where she felt the pain. She noted the time, 10:30 a.m., and thought that the pain might somehow relate to one of her children, who were then at school. When they came home from school at lunchtime, she asked them whether anything unusual had happened about 10:30 that morning. Her daughter, who was 10 years old (and also called Joicey), then said: "Yes, a boy ran into me with his bike. It hit me right on the backside and I hollered 'Oh.'" Mrs. Hurth's letter continued: "She [her daughter] rubbed the spot where she had been hit and the location was identical with the place on my own body where I had felt pain that morning. It was recess time at the school when the incident occurred, in 1959."

Joicey Hurth (in a letter to me) confirmed her mother's memory of the experience. She thought her mother had specifically identified the pain she felt with her (that is, Joicey), but Mrs. Hurth remembered only thinking that one of her children, including Joicey but not necessarily her, was somehow involved. Some further correspondence about details and a later meeting with Mrs. Hurth and Joicey satisfied me that the incident had happened as Mrs. Hurth reported it. Seven years earlier, when she was 3, young Joicey had been involved in a somewhat similar accident, but Mrs. Hurth mentioned no paranormal experience connected with this incident (Stevenson, 1970b, pp. 115-117).

Table 3-1 summarizes 11 cases (including that of Mrs. Joicey A. Hurth) in which the percipient experienced pain at about the same time as the agent was experiencing pain and in the same or a nearby location of the body. In every case

the percipient had no normal knowledge of the agent's physical condition or expectation about it. This small series shows what larger series of spontaneous cases have shown—a close emotional relationship between the persons involved.

The physical pain of the percipient often occurs almost precisely at the location of the percipient's pain, so far as the available information permits us to judge this. However, this correspondence does not warrant our concluding that their two bodies are somehow resonating together as if in direct communication, although we cannot exclude that possibility. The evidence of lapses in time between the two pains (Case 3 of Table 3-1) and their occurrence in somewhat different locations (Case 7) or with different intensities in the experiences (Case 9) suggest instead that the percipient somehow obtains an idea about the condition of the agent and then expresses this idea in his or her body. The processes of communication and elaboration—whatever they may be—may result in the percipient's experience differing from the agent's.

Pain is not the only physical symptom that an extrasensory communication may stimulate. For example, I investigated the case of a woman who said that she felt as if she was "riding a wave" and that she actually "became seasick" on the day when, during World War I, her husband (an army officer), without prior announcement to her, embarked on a ship for France (Stevenson, 1970b, pp. 124-126). The percipient, who was living in the Middle West, knew that her husband was going overseas, but did not know the date of his sailing. Her husband was not seasick during the voyage to France, and so the percipient had translated an awareness of his having sailed and being on the ocean into the sensation of "riding a wave" and "being seasick." She was so certain of her impression that she told her mother she knew her husband had sailed for France. He later confirmed to her that he had sailed on the day of her symptoms.

Mediumistic Cases

Sensitives and mediums have sometimes suffered from the physical symptoms of the persons with whom they seemed to be communicating. Cahagnet (1849) reported the case of a medium, Adèle Maginot, who developed symptoms of choking and coughing as she described the death of a communicator from heart disease. Tenhaeff (1962, pp. 98-100) published another example, that of a sensitive who developed symptoms of discomfort in a knee when she was handling a glove that belonged to a young woman who had injured her knee in a bicycle accident about a year earlier and had continued to have pain in the knee afterward. The medium knew nothing of this accident and its sequela. Osty (1923) described several other instances of this phenomenon and called the experience "coenesthesic hallucinations."

We are not entitled to interpret cases like these as necessarily showing that another personality—whether incarnate or discarnate—somehow directly conveys its condition to the medium's body, although that is a possibility. The physical changes in the medium more probably derive from the medium's mental image of

Table 3-1 **Cases of Telepathic Impressions with Localized Physical Pain**

	Sex of Percipient	*Sex of Apparent Agent*	*Relationship of Percipient to Agent*	*Condition of Agent*	*Experience of Percipient; Location of Pain*	*Published Source*	*Comments*
1.	F	M	Sister	Struck on head during automobile accident	"A blow seemed to strike the back of my head"	Prince (1931, pp. 268-269)	
2.	F	M	Wife	Struck on mouth by tiller while sailing	Felt blow on her lip	Gurney, Myers, Podmore (1886, Vol. 1, pp. 187-189)	The percipient was Joan Severn.
3.	F	F	Mother	In labor for birth of child	"severe and persistent" stomach pains	Heywood (1963)	The mother (percipient) began to have her pain just as that of the daughter (agent) was ending. The delivery was unexpectedly about 5 weeks premature.
4.	F	F	Mother	Right hand severely burned with acid in laboratory	Burning sensation in right hand	Rush (1964, pp. 18-19)	
5.	F	M	Mother	Right hand badly cut in accident	Intense pain in right arm and hand	Dale (1952, pp. 34-35)	
6.	F	F	Mother	Struck by a bicycle on leg and buttock	Pain in right leg and buttocks	Stevenson (1970b, pp. 115-117)	This is the case summarized in the text. The percipient was Joicey A. Hurth.

7.	F	M	Daughter	Attack of "angina pectoris" that was quickly followed by death	"sharp sensation...as though someone had struck me, well below the ribs, on the right side"	Dale (1946, p. 88)	The pain of angina pectoris is usually felt in the center of the chest or somewhat to the left of the midline; it is often also felt in the left neck and arm.
8.	M	M	Psychiatrist	Shot himself in the head suicidally	"dull pain as though something had struck my forehead and then the back of my skull"	Jung (1963, p. 143)	Jung did not say that he identified the presumed agent at the time of having his own experience.
9.	F	F	Mother	In labor for birth of a child	"suffered all night with back pains"	Rhine (1962, pp. 106-107)	The agent had no pain during her delivery, while the percipient had severe pain. The birth was unexpectedly early by 3½ weeks.
10.	F	F	Mother	In fatal automobile accident in which steering wheel of automobile pierced her chest	Severe pain in chest	Rhine (1962, p. 107)	
11.	F	F	Twin Sister	Complications after delivery of a baby; possible pulmonary embolus; pain in chest and shortness of breath	Pain in the chest and shortness of breath	Stevenson (1970b, pp. 117-124)	The percipient, Dora Martin, was in Naples, Italy, while her sister was in Pennsylvania.

the deceased person's injury or illness; and information for this image might get into the medium's mind by telepathy from living persons or in other ways. One of Osty's examples illustrates this. The sensitive, handling a piece of paper contributed by a woman for whom she (the sensitive) was to give a reading, remarked: "Oh, how tired my back is;...my abdomen is painful....I advise you to examine this patient's abdomen; there is certainly something abnormal." The patient in question was 4 months pregnant (Osty, 1923, p. 158).

Experimental Studies

During the 19th century and in this one also, investigators have studied the paranormal communication of physical sensations under experimental conditions. Some experiments of this type required the percipient (blindfolded and otherwise uninformed) to describe what an agent was tasting while an experimenter placed a variety of substances in the agent's mouth (Gurney, Myers, and Podmore, 1886, Vol. 1, pp. 52-56). More germane to the present topic are similar experiments in which the percipient identified with considerable exactitude the part of the agent's body where he was being pricked or otherwise stimulated painfully (Gurney, Myers, and Podmore, 1886, Vol. 1, pp. 56-58; Janet, 1886; Prince, 1921, pp. 204-205).

Comment

Physicians and patients alike often find the precise localization of pain difficult, and exactitude in this matter is almost unattainable. I believe that in some of the cases I have cited we should not attribute to chance the correspondence between the agent's experience and the percipient's. Some readers, however, may not agree with my judgment; and since a central issue of this work is the correspondence in location and form between wounds or other physical marks on one person—in the main cases of the work this is a deceased person—and marks on another person, we cannot cease the effort to find cases in which we can exclude the possibility of chance even more firmly than we can in the best of the cases I have already mentioned. For this purpose an exemplary case is that of Madame Olga Kahl, to which I now turn.

The Physical Expression of Letters and Other Forms Paranormally Communicated

Olga Kahl was one of the most talented sensitives who ever lived and certainly one of the most gifted who agreed to work with scientists. Osty (1932) said that she was the only person he had found in 22 years of searching who could detect, with adequate predictability, the thoughts of another person that had no other representation, such as in writing. Among a total of 73 experiments with her, he counted 36 full successes and 15 partial successes which together made an extraordinary 70% of successes. Although Osty conducted

the largest series of experiments with her, she succeeded with other investigators, such as Besterman (1929, 1930), Efrón (1944), Gröndahl (1930), and Toukholka (1922), who later married her.

Olga Kahl exhibited a wide range of paranormal powers, but I shall confine my review of her experiences and experiments to the one that is pertinent to this book: her capacity to represent mental images on the skin of her arms and upper chest. Fortunately, this is also the ability to which Osty and other investigators properly directed most of their attention.

Although Olga Kahl showed some capacity for discerning other people's thoughts when she was still a child, the first of her later recorded psychophysical experiences occurred when she was 19 years old. She lost a string of pearls and was much vexed by this event. While she was in this perturbed state, some round areas of redness appeared on the skin of her arms. Her family dismissed these marks as an ordinary eruption, although they later came to believe that the round, red areas on Olga Kahl's skin had some connection with the missing (round) pearls. This interpretation emerged when Olga Kahl manifested other psychophysical phenomena that observers identified as dermographisms—with the difference that words appeared on her skin as direct manifestations of her mental images and without anyone's having stroked her skin as in the usual type of dermographism (T. Lewis, 1924, 1927).

Some of Olga Kahl's psychophysical phenomena occurred during stressful events of her life similar to the loss of the string of pearls. For example, she once swallowed a fish bone that seemed to stick in her throat. She became distressed, and immediately a red area in the shape of a fish bone appeared on her neck. On another occasion, when she was living in Constantinople (now Istanbul), she watched some dervishes thrusting skewers through their cheeks. This scene greatly excited her, and she complained of pain in one of her cheeks. "Soon afterward" an abscess developed on the inside of the cheek and eventually penetrated completely through it (Osty, 1929, p. 126).

Even before the two experiences just mentioned, a friend told Olga Kahl about fakirs of India who could make representations of their thoughts appear on their skin; the friend urged Olga Kahl to see what she could do in this line. She gave Olga Kahl an envelope in which she had hidden a small plant. Olga Kahl let herself go into a "special psychic state" and palpated the envelope. A red area in the shape of a clover leaf then developed on one of her forearms. She was 20 years old at the time.

During the late 1920s Olga Kahl lived in Paris with her husband. She practiced as a paid clairvoyant, using her powers to help a clientèle of persons who consulted her about a wide variety of difficulties. Although she had little or no understanding of science, and Besterman (1930) described her as "quite indifferent to the scientific point of view," she cooperated with several investigators, most notably Eugène Osty. She had a favorite method of procedure and often began a series of experiments with conditions that the investigator considered too lax. However, if she found the investigator congenial and felt herself in a condition for

success, she would agree to stricter controls that satisfied all those who studied her and published their observations.[1]

A typical experiment with Olga Kahl developed in the following way. She would ask the investigator to think of a question or a name and to go into an adjoining room and write at least the name on a piece of paper, fold it up, return to the room where she was, and show her the folded paper. Olga Kahl would sometimes touch the paper, after which the investigator would keep it in his hand or pocket until she asked him to unfold and expose what was on it. (Sometimes Olga Kahl would ask the investigator to hold the paper to her forehead, and occasionally she would take the paper with tweezers and burn it up, but always without unfolding it.) She would ask the investigator (or another person acting as "sender") to concentrate his mind on the chosen name and perhaps to look into her eyes. Within a short period—the usual interval seems to have been between 15 seconds and 1 minute—letters or designs would appear in red on the skin of one or other of her forearms; occasionally she would use the upper part of her chest. Sometimes she would hasten the development of the red lines by rubbing her skin; she was aware that this was an unacceptable condition in a serious test, and often she asked someone else to rub her skin or there was no rubbing of it whatever. When the red lines had developed as fully as they were likely to develop, Olga Kahl would ask to have the folded paper exposed and the target name or design revealed. Figures 3-1, 3-2, and 3-3 show the results of some of Osty's experiments.

Sometimes when Olga Kahl could not reproduce the design or name on her skin, she would write it automatically. She required to be in a light trance when demonstrating her powers, and sometimes her husband aided her with hypnotic suggestions. She did better when he was present. (The strictest investigators considered his presence undesirable; but no one ever detected any suggestion of signaling between Olga Kahl and her husband; and she succeeded in his absence.)

Anyone who studies the records of the experiments with Olga Kahl will agree that a close correspondence occurred in most of the reported experiments between the name or design selected for her to reproduce on her skin and the design that actually appeared on her skin. However, she sometimes made mistakes or reproduced the target in a distorted way. These are features often noticed in telepathic experiments and, it should be said, also in ordinary experiences and experiments with memories and processes of association.

There seem, therefore, to have been three levels of communication and processing between the selection of a target and its representation on Olga Kahl's skin. At the first stage the information was somehow communicated to Olga

[1]This positive opinion of the experimenters did not spread to all their readers. Whately Smith (later Carington) (W. W. Smith, 1930) published a review of Besterman's (1930) book in which he castigated the conditions during Besterman's experiments with Olga Kahl as unacceptably loose and called for more rigorous investigations. Smith (Carington) did not mention Osty's earlier investigations in his review of Besterman's book, so we do not know what he thought of them. I think that Osty's controls were satisfactory and that Besterman's were also.

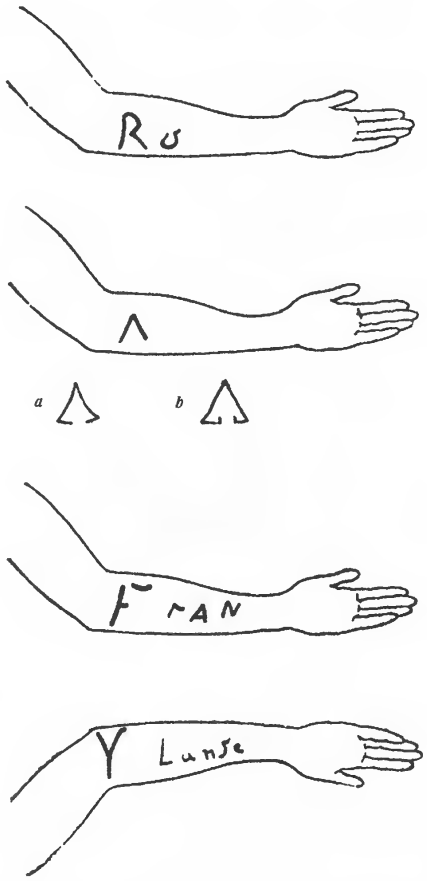

Figure 3-1 Red lines on the skin of Olga Kahl corresponding to names and designs communicated paranormally. (From Osty, 1929.)(Courtesy of Institut Métapsychique International, Paris, France.)

Kahl's mind, apparently at subconscious levels. (This process with her was as mysterious as still are all communications that we call paranormal, and I can say nothing about it.) At the second level, still a mental one, the information Olga Kahl had obtained worked its way—there seems no better phrase for this—through subconscious layers of her mind toward some kind of expression and in the process became sometimes reduced or modified by other contents of her mind. At the third level the information or part of it became represented by red lines on her skin. I shall next comment on some observations of the second level changes that experimenters observed.

Olga Kahl sometimes got the initial letter or first part of a name correct, but could not state the full name. Psychologists have devoted some attention to this difficulty, common in ordinary life, under the heading of the "tip of the tongue" phenomenon (R. Brown and McNeill, 1966; Wenzl, 1932, 1936). An example occurred when Osty thought of the name *Rosa*; the skin of Olga Kahl's left forearm developed first the red lines of a capital *R* followed by a small *o*, but nothing more (topmost drawing of Figure 3-1). This was an experiment in which the name was not written down: Osty only thought of it. When the target was *François*,

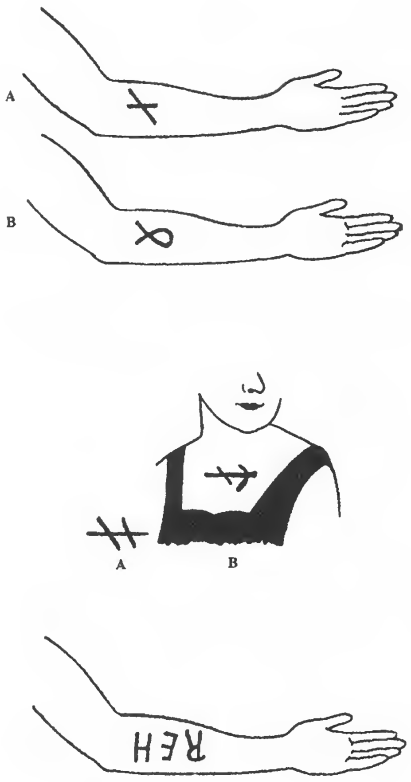

Figure 3-2 Red lines on the skin of Olga Kahl corresponding to names and designs communicated paranormally. (From Osty, 1929.) (Courtesy of Institut Métapsychique International, Paris, France.)

Olga Kahl's arm showed the first four letters of the name only (third drawing from the top in Figure 3-1). In this test also the name was thought of, but not written down. In another test the target was *Argentina*. Olga Kahl said that the name was that of a woman commencing with *G* or *J*. Then she wrote, automatically, *Jentine* and at the same time spoke the word *Jentine*.

Something similar occurred with some designs that were used as targets. In the test from which the designs second from the top of Figure 3-1 derived, the target was the small design (b) on the right of the two designs below the forearm. Olga Kahl reproduced the two main lines of the open triangle on her skin, but no more. Abandoning the effort, she then drew the design (a) that is to the left of the target. This showed that she had perceived a more complete image of the target (although still not fully accurate) than she could represent with lines on her arm.

Sometimes Olga Kahl's automatic writing (or the forms on her skin) showed mirror reversal, a feature occasionally observed in the automatic writing of other subjects. A Russian by birth, and a poor linguist, Olga Kahl never attained more than a rudimentary knowledge of French, even after she had lived for some years in Paris. On at least two occasions a French name appeared in her mind or on her skin with Russian spelling, as if somehow the sound of the name had become transformed by her into a representation in the Russian language. The bottom design of

Figure 3-2 illustrates this transformation. The letters *REH* appeared on Olga Kahl's arm—upside down from the usual orientation—when the target was the name *René*. (In Russian the letter *N* is written *H*.) Looked at this way, only the final *é* of the name was missing. On another occasion, the target was *Maurice*, of which Olga Kahl perceived the first three letters correctly, hesitated, and then wrote automatically a word that could be read as either *Morus* or *Morris*. She knew normally that the owner of the name was English, and at some level had produced an English rendition, or what she thought might be one, of the full name.

Sometimes Olga Kahl seemed to combine elements in the minds of two persons present. An example of this occurred during an experiment in which Besterman and the French psychical researcher René Warcollier participated together (Besterman, 1929, 1930). Olga Kahl asked Warcollier to think of his wife's name. After two mistakes she correctly gave the first letter, *G*, of the name, which was Germaine. She could go no further for a time and asked Besterman to join in the effort of sending. She then spoke the word *Genriette*, but said there was no such name. However, the name of *Besterman's* wife was Henrietta, the French version of which is Henriette. Furthermore, the Russian form of Henriette is Genriette (Roberts, 1932), so this test provided another example of linguistic transmogrification.

Closely similar to the preceding example was an incident in which Besterman, asked by Olga Kahl to think of a name, first thought of *François*, but rejected it as being too difficult and selected *Jean* instead. Olga Kahl insisted that the name selected began with an *F*, but she could not obtain the full name correctly and said (incorrectly) that it was Fernand. On another occasion Warcollier drew a *Z*, but thought of a cross; Olga Kahl's arm developed the red lines of a cross (Besterman, 1929, 1930).

Olga Kahl said that she was unsuccessful in obtaining names completely unfamiliar to her. She believed that concentration on the selected name (or design) by the sender helped her. She found some senders better than others and would sometimes select one from among a small group of persons present. Although she had some preference for having the sender write down the name she was to perceive, she sometimes omitted this step and had successes when the sender, at her request, simply thought concentratedly of the name or design. (I cited two examples of this above.)

Some of the preceding examples show that correct images would appear on Olga Kahl's skin without her having any conscious awareness of the target name or design. This could also be implied when she reproduced certain geometric figures (such as the second one from the bottom of Figure 3-2) that could not be verbally expressed in a word or two. Stronger evidence of subconscious mental processes occurred when she spoke incorrectly a name that she represented correctly on the skin. The bottom design of Figure 3-1 provided an example of this. The target name was *Yolande*. The *Y* of this name appeared first and prominently on Olga Kahl's forearm, near the elbow. Looking at this letter on her arm, she asked whether the sender had thought of the name

Yvonne. The sender did not reply to this question, and soon the other letters of Yolande, except *o*, appeared in proper place. This experiment also illustrated another feature of the phenomena, which was that when a letter of a name did not show up in the usual red lines, a place would be left for it as if there had been an intention for it to appear. A gap, presumably intended for the *o*, occurred between the *Y* and *l* of *Yolande*. Another example of this last feature occurred when the name *Sabine* was the target (second drawing from the bottom of Figure 3-3). Of this name the *S* was somewhat distorted and the final *e* incomplete. The *i* was missing, but a place was left for it.[2]

Sometimes when Olga Kahl had seemed unable to reproduce a complete design on her skin, the sender would tell her what it was or show it to her, whereupon she might be able to add to the pattern on her skin. An example of this occurred in the production of the upper two designs of Figure 3-2. Olga Kahl produced two crossed lines on her forearm, but got no further. Told that the target was the number *8*, she then closed the distal part of the figure already showing on her skin to form the lower portion of the number *8*, but she could not complete the proximal part of it. Another example of delay in completing the figure on the skin occurred when the target was the double triangle shown in the upper part (B) of Figure 3-3. For this test Olga Kahl first produced only two lines forming an angle, and nothing further developed until the sender (Charles Richet in this instance) showed her the design he had made, which is shown in the figure (B) beneath the drawings of her arm. Almost immediately, another line appeared on Olga Kahl's arm and formed the larger triangle; she then tried to add the smaller inside triangle, but did not succeed.

On one occasion a physical object was used to cast a shadow on Olga Kahl's skin, and the shape of the shadow was represented by red lines (Efrón, 1944). On another occasion (with Osty) a physical object, a goblet, was the target (bottom design of Figure 3-3).

Efforts at paranormal dermographism fatigued Olga Kahl. This appears to have been a factor in her reluctance, despite a conscious willingness, to lend herself to scientific experiments. On some days she sensed that she could not succeed in tests of dermographism. This was particularly true on days when she described herself as depressed.

What I call the third level of Olga Kahl's processes—that of the representation on her skin of images—is fully as interesting as the purely mental processes. Indeed, for the purposes of the present work this level is more important than the other levels. Readers should also note that one may reject the evidence for para-

[2]Missing letters and transmogrifications are a common feature of the "tip of the tongue" phenomenon. Olga Kahl's failure to reproduce certain letters in her dermographism may show the same processes during what I have called the second level of her phenomena; however, local variations in the blood vessels of her skin may have caused the omissions and distortions of parts of the names and designs she was trying to reproduce.

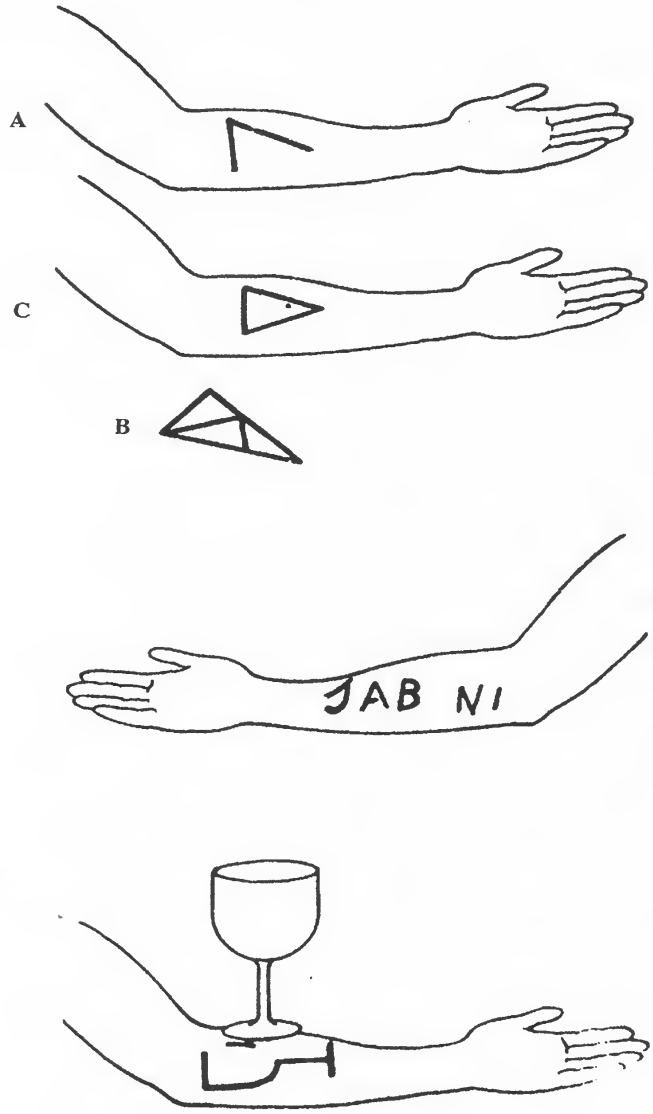

Figure 3-3 Red lines on the skin of Olga Kahl corresponding to names and designs communicated paranormally (except for the lowest target, which was presented to her normal vision). (From Osty, 1929.) (Courtesy of Institut Métapsychique International, Paris, France.)

normal communication of the targets to Olga Kahl—although I myself accept it—while remaining profoundly impressed by her ability to reproduce names and designs on her skin with considerable detail.

In connection with the third level of Olga Kahl's phenomena, the following points deserve noting. The patterns—letters or designs—appearing on Olga Kahl's skin were red, and their phenomenal appearance seemed due to a closely controlled

dilatation of arterioles in the dermis. Friction of the skin in the area where the images were to appear facilitated their manifestation, but was not always necessary or always successful. The red lines usually remained distinctly visible for between 15 seconds and 1 minute, and they then faded.[3] As they became indistinct, the area where they had been became diffusely pink or red. (This last change corresponds to the flush or flare that spreads into surrounding areas after a heavy stroke or repeated lighter strokes on the skin [T. Lewis, 1924, 1927].)

Olga Kahl had some control over the area of her skin where images were to appear. She sometimes allowed the investigator or sender to choose the arm for the images. When one forearm had become used, the images would appear on the other, and when both had been used (and were perhaps still red) she would produce images on the upper part of her chest (middle drawing of Figure 3-2).

I mentioned above that following the production of a name or design on her arm or chest, as the design faded the entire area would become red, presumably from a diffuse dilatation of arterioles in her skin. Areas of vasodilatation also appeared elsewhere on her body, such as her cheeks and chin, even though they had not been used in the experiments. Olga Kahl had no control over the rate of disappearance of the redness in her skin and sometimes had to seclude herself for a day or two before her skin returned to normal (Efrón, 1944).

Osty, a physician, tested the ordinary sensitivity of Olga Kahl's skin to strokes with a blunt pointed instrument. When firmly stroked in this way the skin of nearly everyone shows an area of blanching (at the site stroked) followed by a phase of redness. I mentioned in Chapter 2 that T. Lewis (1924, 1927) found that many healthy persons had some swelling afterward in the area stroked, and as many as 5% developed a distinct wheal, leading to dermographism. The question arose of whether Olga Kahl belonged to the group of persons who show dermographism when their skin is stroked as I have described. Osty found that Olga Kahl, compared with other women who happened to be present at sessions and who agreed to have their skin stroked in the same way, showed a "very feeble" response that was "much inferior" to that of the other women tested.

Comment. Osty (1929) devoted a large part of his main report of experiments with Olga Kahl to descriptions of the central nervous system and the autonomic nervous system which mediate some dilatations of the blood vessels of the skin. Blushing during certain emotional states, an experience familiar to almost everyone, shows the influence of the nervous system on vasodilatation. However, blushing shows neither voluntariness nor an ability to control the sites of vasodi-

[3]The evanescence of the images probably accounts for the failure to obtain and publish photographs of the images appearing on Olga Kahl's skin. Osty (1929) referred to plans for photography, but in the end published only sketches of the appearance of the skin.

latation, let alone that of dilating blood vessels to represent particular forms.[4] Nevertheless, Osty expressed confidence that further studies in neuroanatomy and neurophysiology would reveal the mechanism whereby Olga Kahl voluntarily expressed images on her skin. He wrote:

> Although Madame Kahl is in fact unconscious of the nervous mechanisms that she sets in play, she is completely aware both of her intention and of the site for the expression of her thought on her skin. Histopathologists should see in this an indication of nervous pathways for the control of the circulation which their belief in the pure automatism of the blood vessels has prevented them from studying. (Osty, 1929, p. 139; my translation)

If histopathologists took Osty's advice to search for the nervous pathways he thought they would find, I have not learned that they have succeeded in finding them.

Before leaving the case of Olga Kahl, I shall mention some similarities between her case and that of Elisabeth K. Both showed an ability—I do not see why we should not call it that—to assume the physical symptoms of other persons with whom they became emotionally identified. (I am thinking here of the abscess Olga Kahl developed in her cheek soon after observing dervishes push skewers through their cheeks.) I earlier suggested that such persons and other stigmatists are unusually impressionable (to use Lechler's word) and may identify with other persons more than the average person does. This may be so, but we should not therefore overlook the possibility of a physiological susceptibility in Olga Kahl and the other persons with whom I am now comparing her. Many persons become deeply affected subjectively by the physical sufferings of others without reproducing their wounds. Similarly, a few persons—although no more than a few—have shown powers of telepathy equal to Olga Kahl's without being able to "write" their received communications on their skin without touching it.[5]

[4]Blushing occurs when a particular thought, often of shame or embarrassment, produces a widespread dilatation of the arterioles of the skin. However, blushing is largely restricted to ordinarily exposed parts of the body, that is, the face and neck. It may, however, extend to other areas of the body in certain persons if their attention is drawn to those parts. Darwin (1872/1896) gave several examples, which show that even ordinary persons have some influence over the arterioles of the skin through the attention they may give to different regions of the body.

[5]Other persons have claimed the ability to reproduce words on the skin from thoughts alone, without normal stimulation of the skin. Of these, the most notable is Soeur Jeanne des Anges, who was the principal *possédée* among the nuns of Loudun in the early 17th century (Jeanne des Anges, 1886). Her dermographism occurred on her hand. A critical eyewitness, Killigrew, stated:

> ...on her hand I saw a colour rise a little ruddy, and run for the length of an inch upon her vein, and in that a great many red specks; and they contracted into letters which made a distinct word; and it was the same she spake, "Joseph."... This, as I live, I saw; nor could I find the least argument to question the reality of this miracle. (Killigrew, 1803, p. 106) *(continued)*

THE POSSIBLE INFLUENCE OF A PREGNANT MOTHER'S MENTAL IMAGES ON HER EMBRYO AND FETUS: MATERNAL IMPRESSIONS

The belief that a shock or other strong impression in a pregnant mother can produce a mark or other defect in her baby has been held for centuries; although it is less common now in Western countries, it is still widely accepted in other parts of the world.

In a typical reported case of this type a pregnant mother sees on the street a person with a serious malformation, such as feet that have been partly amputated. She becomes distressed and fears afterward that her baby will be similarly malformed. When the baby is born, parts of its feet are absent, corresponding to the defective feet its mother saw (Case 3 in Table 3-2, from Montgomery, 1857). Cases of this type are usually called "maternal impressions." In most instances the stimulus is a visual one perceived by the pregnant mother, but sometimes a vivid verbal description of a defect the mother has not herself seen may act as an apparently causal factor (Case 39 of Table 3-2, from Goodell, 1871).

Writers on reproduction and embryology in ancient Greece and Rome assumed the reality of maternal impressions, and so did their successors, at least up to the 16th century, when Paré (1573/1982) cited cases of the type and endorsed the idea that maternal impressions could cause birth defects.[6]

In the 17th century Gervase Markham expressed skepticism and even scoffed at the belief in maternal impressions (Glenister, 1964). Opposition to the belief became stronger in the 18th century. In the early years of that century two English authors buffeted each other with alternate publications on the subject. One of them, D. Turner (1714/1731), defended the reality of maternal effects on the fetus, while the other, Blondel (1729), decried the idea as a crude superstition (P. K. Wilson, 1992). Later in the same century William Hunter (1718-1783) inveighed against it in his lectures on obstetrics (Hall,

[5]*(continued)* (Joseph was the saint invoked to help free Soeur Jeanne from the devil possessing her; and Soeur Jeanne had spoken his name just before the name appeared on her hand.)

Other subjects showing paranormal dermographism include the three persons on whom Dr. M. H. Biggs induced with suggestion during hypnotism areas of erythema in the form of a cross (Gurney, 1887). In one subject part of the letter *S* appeared above the cross in response to an instruction to manifest the full word *Sanctis* at that site. Dr. Biggs gave verbal suggestions to two of the subjects, but with the third he expressed the wish for the cross to appear only to himself, that is, silently.

[6]Readers wishing to have more information about the history of the belief in maternal impressions than I shall include in this section can find it in Barrow (1971), Glenister (1964), Gould and Pyle (1896), L. S. King (1978), Reeve (1989), and Warkany (1959). Rousseau (1982), in an essay on Tobias Smollett, reviewed ideas about maternal impressions current in 18th-century England. Smollett, a physician as well as a novelist, wittily exploited the belief for scenes in *Peregrine Pickle* (Smollett, 1751/1964).

1785).[7] Elliotson (1852), referring to his medical education in the first decades of the 19th century, stated: "All my medical teachers dismissed the idea with contempt."

Controversy about maternal impressions was equally vigorous among French scientists. Buffon, the greatest French biologist of the 18th century, severely criticized the idea (Buffon, 1830, Vol. 4, pp. 480-482), but it had at least one fervent defender, Bablot (1788).

Some physicians of the 18th and 19th centuries who continued to believe in maternal impressions supposed that small nervous connections would be found between the uterus and the placenta and that these could somehow convey a mother's mental impression to her fetus. Advances in physiology removed all basis for such conjectures and also for an equally imaginative suggestion that exchanges of blood between mother and fetus somehow transmitted the mother's impression to the fetus.

In the 1830s the German physiologist Johannes Müller (1834-40/1840-42, Vol. 2, pp. 1404-1406) stated three reasons why he disbelieved in the effect on a fetus of maternal impressions: a) the already mentioned lack of physical connections suitable for communication between the mother and fetus; b) the frequent occurrence of negative instances in which pregnant women had been frightened and had expected to have a marked or malformed baby but had not; and c) the lack of correspondence between the frightening stimuli that the mothers mentioned and the common types of birth defects, such as cleft lip and absent extremities. (Müller emphasized the repetitive forms—what we might today call the recognized syndromes—of congenital anomalies, which studies of embryology and teratology were then just beginning to elucidate.) Müller concluded his dismissal of maternal impressions with derisive allusions to "animal magnetism," from the study of which developed both what we today call hypnotism and also the investigations of the phenomena that are today considered paranormal. It is important to

[7]Charles Darwin stated that William Hunter had told his father, Robert Waring Darwin (1766-1848):

> that during many years every woman in a large London Lying-in Hospital was asked before her confinement whether anything had specially affected her mind, and the answer was written down; and it so happened that in no one instance could a coincidence be detected between the woman's answer and any abnormal structure; but when she knew the nature of the structure, she frequently suggested some fresh cause. (Darwin, 1898, Vol. 2, pp. 251-252)

I believe Charles Darwin dropped a stitch here. Charles Darwin's father, Robert Waring Darwin, was a youth of only 17 years when William Hunter died in 1783, and it seems unlikely, although not impossible, that William Hunter could have told him about this inquiry, if it ever occurred. Authors later than Charles Darwin have sometimes referred to William Hunter's prospective study in praising language, but they never cite a source for what they state about it. If the study was ever made, Hunter never published its details or even mentioned it in his own writings. William Hunter may have talked about the advisability of a prospective study and even said that he planned to conduct one; then later writers, including Charles Darwin, may have come to think that Hunter actually accomplished what he had only planned or recommended.

I cite below a prospective study that *was* conducted and reported, at least in summary form (Fisher, 1870).

note here that although Müller was familiar with birth defects, he was writing about reports he had read of cases attributed to maternal impressions; he seems to have had no direct experience of them himself.

Müller's high reputation did not suffice to extinguish interest in maternal impressions on the part of physicians, and during the 19th century at least several hundred reports of exemplifying cases were published in medical journals and books. Moreover, the belief in maternal impressions continued to receive support among some scientists of competence and eminence. For example, Müller's contemporary, von Baer, who is justly regarded as the founder of modern embryology, reported the case of his own sister. She had been much perturbed by a fire that she saw in the distance and feared was that of her own house burning. She was then 6 or 7 months pregnant and long afterward

> declared that the flame was constantly before her eyes. Two or three months after the fire she gave birth to a daughter, who had a red mark on her forehead which went to a point at the top in the shape of a blazing flame. It did not fade until she was seven years old. (Burdach, 1837, Vol. 2, p. 127; my translation)

The extensive writings on maternal impressions in the 19th century show the varying fortunes of the belief in them among physicians. If an exponent of the belief published a series of cases and supported the idea of maternal impressions, within a few years or sooner another author would publish a critique and raise again the familiar objections.

In 1865 Meadows published a defense of the concept, and, acknowledging the absence of any neural connections between mother and fetus, he suggested a process indistinguishable from modern ideas of paranormal communications. He believed the data "force upon us the conviction that mind does in some mysterious way operate across matter" (Meadows, 1865, p. 89).[8] A few years later Fisher (1870), a skeptic, again emphasized negative instances in which women had been frightened during pregnancy (and expected to have malformed children) without any ill effects on their babies. Fisher reported having made a prospective study of over 1200 children he had delivered and of whose mothers he had enquired before their deliveries "in regard to their apprehensions of deformity in their offspring" (p. 258). He found that "by far the larger number" of the mothers expressed such fears and frequently specified the nature of the malformation they expected their child might have. Yet among this group of babies he found only three cases of birth defects.[9]

[8]Using different terms, several later authors proposed that some paranormal process would ultimately account for birth defects related to maternal impressions (Bruck, 1924; Drzewiecki, 1891; and Lowman, 1889).

[9]In a paper of more than 50 pages, Fisher devoted less than 1 page to the report of his survey. He did not state how many of the women he questioned expected (as opposed to merely fearing) that they would have malformed children, although many of them did expect as well as fear such an outcome. He also did not state whether the three women who did deliver babies with anomalies had been exposed to frightening stimuli during their pregnancies.

Taking the opposing view, Barker (1887) published a long paper in which he cited numerous examples of correspondences between an unusual stimulus to a pregnant mother and a subsequent birthmark or birth defect on her child. In the discussion of Barker's paper, Busey (1887), in the course of reviewing 41 additional cases, addressed the familiar question of chance as an explanation for them:

> Upon the common doctrine of chance, the coincidence [between maternal impression and subsequent defect] is too remarkable to be explained so readily, and, if one [case] is suggestive, a second adds great weight, and a third is almost conclusive. The element of chance is eliminated by the great variety of causes with corresponding effects; that is, in each of the foregoing cases the circumstance producing the impression is different; yet in each case the effect is, to a greater or less degree, in correspondence with the causal circumstance. (Busey, 1887, p. 186)

In 1890 Dabney published one of the longest and most thorough reviews of this subject. He summarized reports of 90 cases published between 1853 and 1886. The series was large enough to permit an analysis of various features. He concluded that in 69 (77%) of the 90 cases there was "quite a close correspondence" between the impression upon the mother and her baby's defect. Dabney drew some other conclusions from his data. For example, he found that defects related to errors of embryological development tended to be associated with maternal impressions received early in pregnancy; in contrast, birthmarks and other abnormalities of the skin and hair tended to be associated with maternal impressions occurring later in pregnancy. Dabney also noted instances in which the mother-to-be seemed to have been little or not at all consciously affected by the stimulus and had no expectation that her child would be defective. He attached little weight to what a mother said about the kind of baby she expected to have. He emphasized that maternal impressions account for few of all cases of birth defects, and his main conclusion was "that they are *one* of the causes of defects or deformities, but by no means the only cause" (Dabney, 1890, p. 214). Dabney was undaunted by ignorance concerning the process, psychophysiological or other, that could mediate between the maternal impression and the related birthmark or birth defect.

Skeptics remained unquelled, and they sometimes even protested against the publication of reports of cases of alleged maternal impressions (Murdock, 1888). Conant (1863), Morland (1853), and Rich (1891) each published instances of a pregnant woman who had been frightened, expected to have a malformed baby, and nevertheless had a normal one.

Ballantyne, who in the 1890s wrote a series of papers on this subject with reports of additional cases, adopted a stance similar to that of Dabney:

> The apparently extraordinary character of the phenomena witnessed is in itself no argument against their truth if the sources of information are reli-

> able....We are not so much concerned at present with the question, How are the effects produced? but rather with the primary inquiry whether, in conjunction with certain definite circumstances, certain clearly marked phenomena occur so frequently and so persistently as to compel the belief that there is more than the element of chance or coincidence in their association. (Ballantyne, 1890-91, p. 625)

Ballantyne engaged himself in a cause that was, by his time, rapidly losing ground. After the beginning of this century the number of reports of maternal impressions published in medical journals declined markedly, and they eventually became sporadic (Farkas and Farkas, 1974; Formijne, 1915; Leclerc-Montmoyen, 1949; H. C. Williams and Pembroke, 1988). Historians of teratology reviewing various theories of birth defects in the second half of this century dismissed and sometimes derided the belief in maternal impressions (Barrow, 1971; Glenister, 1964; Warkany, 1959; Warkany and Kalter, 1962).

Dabney (1890, p. 191) suggested that "thinking men came to doubt the truth of those things which they could not understand." They did not heed a warning from the mathematician Pierre de Laplace, who, 75 years earlier, had written with reference to "animal magnetism," later to be known as hypnotism: "We are so far from knowing all the forces of nature and their processes that it would show little wisdom to deny phenomena just because we cannot explain them in the present state of our knowledge" (1814/1840, p. 133; my translation). A future historian of medicine disposing of more space than I can allow myself here might connect the decline (at the end of the 19th century) in the belief in maternal impressions to the rise among members of the medical profession of an increasingly materialistic view of human nature. The failure to identify a process for the action of maternal impressions eventually led to denial that there were any phenomena to be explained. Yet there may be.

I mentioned earlier Meadows's (1865) endorsement of maternal impressions with the idea that "mind does in some mysterious way operate across matter." We are certainly not in a better position to say today what this "mysterious way" may be; but evidence developed from more than a century of systematic research has made the belief that mind can act upon matter more plausible than it seemed to be earlier. Accordingly, I believe that we should reopen the question of maternal impressions. However, we can only expect the concept to gain new adherents if we take into account two indubitable facts.

First, we must acknowledge that major birth defects and birthmarks (of say more than a centimeter in diameter) are not common. For example, Wilde (1843) studied the incidence of congenital malformations among 23,413 births during 8 years (1832-40) at the Imperial Lying-in Hospital of Vienna and found an incidence of 1 in 266, which is less than 0.4%. He was admittedly counting only major malformations, which he called "monstrosities"; and the incidence of congenital defects of some kind is much higher, perhaps as high as 2% today (Kennedy,

1967).[10] However, for the purpose of the substantial birthmarks and birth defects usually associated with a maternal impression I think we are justified in saying—as I did above—that such anomalies are not common.

Second, it has been argued that if the fears of pregnant women could produce important morphological changes in their fetuses, medical reports of birth defects related to maternal impressions would be more frequent than they now are or, to return to the 19th century, than they were then. However, we can also note that reports of such correlations are (and have been) few in relation to all the births and also in relation to all the babies with congenital anomalies that have been born. Accordingly we can say that maternal impressions at best can account for only a small portion of all congenital anomalies. It follows that if maternal impressions have any effect on fetuses, the effect occurs only among mothers and fetuses who are especially susceptible—either at a psychological level or a physical one. I agree with such predecessors as Elliotson, Dabney, and Ballantyne in believing that an unusual stimulus to a pregnant woman has sometimes caused an unusual birth defect (less often an unusual birthmark) in her baby. Taylor (1876) succinctly emphasized the importance of not allowing negative instances to bias our appraisal of the positive examples, rarer though these may be. He wrote:

> It is said that many mothers are apprehensive during their pregnancy of some impending evil to themselves or their offspring, and may even be exposed to shocking sights, which produce *no* effect on the foetus, for there is no nervous connection between the mother and her unborn babe; but all mothers and babies are not equally susceptible to such influences, therefore this proves nothing in the special cases which *cannot* be explained. (p. 73)

This is a matter that readers should judge for themselves. In order to assist, I have provided in Table 3-2 summaries of 50 selected cases of maternal impressions.

In choosing these cases from among several hundred of which I have read reports or summaries, I used the following criteria. First, I chose cases that had been better attested than have many published ones. For example, in many of those that I selected, a physician (usually the author of the report) had both seen the wounded or disfigured person who had impressed the pregnant woman and examined the later-born baby; he was thus in a position to testify concerning the correspondence between the stimulus and the birth defect or birthmark. Second, I preferred cases in which the correspondence between the stimulus and baby's defect was exact or at least close. Third, I preferred cases the reports of which gave the most detail. Even so, the reports of many cases are lamentably brief and sometimes condensed into just one or two paragraphs. Only two were accompanied by photographs and one by a sketch. Only one

[10]In Chapter 16 and Table 16-1 I give further data on the incidence of birth defects in various series.

report (Lagache, 1908) provided all the circumstantial details that a critical reader might wish to have. Fourth, I selected cases having unusual birth defects (or birthmarks). I did not include any case of clubfoot, and the series has only one case of cleft lip, which occurred with a cleft palate. I have, however, included a few of the common types of birthmarks—hyperpigmented macules and port-wine stains (nevus flammeus).

My criteria for this series thus differed from those of Dabney (1890), who selected "from various sources" 90 cases, "which seem to me worthy of credence." My purpose had not been to provide, like Dabney, a representative sample of *all* cases of claimed maternal impressions. Instead, I have selected cases that seem to have substantial evidence of some paranormal cause linking the stimulus received by the pregnant woman to the effect in her later-born baby.

I do not doubt that many women are frightened during a pregnancy without this having ill effects on their babies. Although negative cases are far less often reported than positive ones in the literature of maternal impressions, a few have been published. I cited some examples earlier of published cases in which a pregnant woman had been frightened, expected her baby to be malformed, and nevertheless delivered a normal baby (Conant, 1863; Morland, 1853; Rich, 1891). My question is: Does a frightening experience in a pregnant woman *sometimes* have an effect on the form of her baby?

One cannot form a reliable judgment on this matter from the study of only a few cases. However, I think that readers who take the trouble to study the details of Table 3-2 will come to share my belief that mental images in a pregnant woman's mind have sometimes influenced the form of her gestating baby.

I have ordered the cases in Table 3-2 according to the following divisions:

1-37 Cases in which the baby's mother *saw* whatever injury or malformation appeared to correspond with the baby's birth defect;
38-40 Cases in which the mother only *heard about* the related injury;
41-47 Cases in which the mother's body was itself wounded or otherwise affected, for example by a surgical operation, the wound or other effect on her corresponding to a birthmark on her later-born baby;
48-50 Cases in which a mother, believing that her baby would have a birthmark following some stimulation to the mother, tried to divert the birthmark to a less visible part of the body, apparently with success.

I will next draw attention to some of the recurrent features in the cases summarized in Table 3-2.

The Types of Stimuli Figuring in the Cases

In Table 3-3 I have grouped the stimuli to the pregnant woman according to their association with violent events or ones that included wounds, such as surgical operations.

Table 3-2 **Selected Cases of Maternal Impressions**

Impressing Stimulus to Mother	*Lesion on Baby*	*Duration of Pregnancy at Time of Stimulus*	*Mother Feared Baby Would Be Affected*	*Reference*	*Comments*
1. Mother's brother had hand torn off by machinery and forearm afterward amputated above the wrist; mother nursed him for several weeks during her pregnancy	Congenital absence of hand and distal portion of forearm; same arm (side not stated) as that amputated on mother's brother	Not stated	Not stated	Adams, cited by Morland (1853)	Dabney (1890) cited this case and said the mother saw her brother's amputated arm during the "early period" of her pregnancy, but Morland's report does not give any information on this point.
2. Witnessed surgical removal of a metacarpal bone from husband's hand	Congenital absence of corresponding metacarpal	4 months	Not stated	Fearn (1851)	
3. Saw man with malformed feet having distal third absent	Congenital absence of distal third of both feet	Not stated, but she had evidently seen the man with defective feet before she had become pregnant	Yes	Montgomery (1857)	Montgomery saw the malformed man and the baby with the birth defects of both feet. It died a few minutes after birth.
4. Saw baby with one finger congenitally	Congenital absence of one finger; two	2 months	Yes	Montgomery (1857)	Mother "known to be, at all times,

Table 3-2 *(continued)*

Impressing Stimulus to Mother	*Lesion on Baby*	*Duration of Pregnancy at Time of Stimulus*	*Mother Feared Baby Would Be Affected*	*Reference*	*Comments*
absent and other fingers syndactylous	other fingers syndactylous. Deformities said to be identical to those of baby the mother saw				very nervous and easily alarmed."
5. Middle, ring and little fingers of the left hand of her child accidentally cut deeply with a wood chopper	Congenital absence of middle, ring and little fingers of the left hand	3 months	Yes	Ballantyne (1890-91)	According to Ballantyne, "the mark of the wound on the fingers of the child can still be seen and corresponds exactly in position with the line along which the fingers of the infant are deficient."
6. Saw deformed left index finger of a frequent visitor to the family. The fingernail was thickened and curved so that it resembled a lion's claw; this	Left index finger had a clawlike nail exactly resembling that of the visitor	1 month and later	Yes	Artault (1908)	The mother was described as being "obsessed" by the visitor's clawlike fingernail. Every time he came to the house "she did not take her eyes off the guest's

deformity had resulted from an accident					fingernail, terrified that her baby would be born with a similar one" (my translation).
7. Was present during amputation of arm of a 6-year-old child after the child's arm had been run over and mutilated by a wagon	Congenital absence of left hand and wrist	2 months	Not stated	Elliotson (1852)	Elliotson took this and the following case from an earlier report that I have not seen.
8. Saw child with congenital absence of left hand and wrist	Congenital absence of left forearm and distal part of upper arm	6 weeks	Not stated	Elliotson (1852)	The congenitally malformed baby of the preceding case was the stimulus of this one. On seeing the first malformed child the mother of this one "became sick and faintish."
9. Saw heavy trunk lid fall on right forearm of her 3-year-old son	Congenital absence of right forearm	4 months	Not stated	Pitcher (1855-56)	At the time of the accident the mother "was very much excited."
10. Saw man who had lost parts of the	Congenital absence of distal portions	1 month	Yes	Nettekoven (1840-41)	The sight of the deformed man made

Table 3-2 *(continued)*

Impressing Stimulus to Mother	*Lesion on Baby*	*Duration of Pregnancy at Time of Stimulus*	*Mother Feared Baby Would Be Affected*	*Reference*	*Comments*
fingers of both hands through frostbite	of two fingers on right hand and three on left hand; distal phalanges of some toes missing, others webbed. Constriction bands on some fingers				on the mother the "most vivid impression," and she became "ice cold." Nettekoven observed both the frostbitten man and the child. He said the child's hands and the man's were "in many respects similar (except that the man had no constriction bands)." Nettekoven did not mention the condition of the deformed man's toes.
11. Saw over a period of time a young girl with an "enormous macroglossia"	Macroglossia and also lymphangiomata of the face	Not stated	Yes	Brault (1908)	The mother had seen the girl who had macroglossia (which had left a strong impression on her) during an earlier pregnancy, which ended in

					miscarriage. During her next pregnancy she dreamed about the girl with macroglossia, awoke crying, and thereafter was obsessed with the appearance of the child and remained convinced that her baby would be similarly malformed. Brault operated successfully on both the affected children.
12. Held arm of brother-in-law after he had had his hand amputated following a crushing injury	Congenital absence of left hand	1 month	Not stated	Reeves, cited by Lowman (1889)	Lowman did not state which of the brother-in-law's hands had been amputated.
13. Saw man who had only one external ear, the other having been cut off by a sword during war	Congenital absence of left external ear	1-2 months	Yes	Leclerc-Montmoyen (1949)	Leclerc-Montmoyen knew the soldier whose ear had been cut off, and he delivered the baby with the left external ear absent. Leclerc-Montmoyen's report did not state

Table 3-2 *(continued)*

Impressing Stimulus to Mother	*Lesion on Baby*	*Duration of Pregnancy at Time of Stimulus*	*Mother Feared Baby Would Be Affected*	*Reference*	*Comments*
					which ear of the ex-soldier had been cut off.
14. Teenage daughter had her ears pierced for earrings with resultant inflammation and suppuration of the ears	Congenital perforation of both earlobes	1-2 months	No	Barker (1887)	Although the mother did not believe that her baby would be affected, she herself had been markedly distressed by the inflammation of her daughter's ears to the extent that she was separated from the daughter for a time so that she would not be disturbed by seeing her ears. Barker examined both the daughter who had her ears pierced and the newborn baby.
15. Older son's radius operated upon with resultant "considerable deviation" of axis of the hand	Congenital malformation similar to deviation of older brother, but actually greater	Mother became pregnant "soon after" the operation on her son's arm	Not stated	Goisque (1910)	The author was confident that the first child's condition was not heritable.

					Goisque treated the first child and examined the second one.
16. Saw at close range a man with a tracheostomy, who could not speak and was wearing a tube in the tracheostomy hole	Pedunculated "wart growth," vascular, about 4 centimeters in diameter, covering a sinus, about 1 centimeter deep in midline of neck "midway between hyoid bone and sternum"	7 months	No	Thompson (1878)	Mother had been "much alarmed" at the sight of the man's deformity, and "it was some time before she recovered herself. She did not at the time anticipate any corresponding malformation of her child." Dabney (1890) doubted the authenticity of this case, because the birth defect was a developmental one and the maternal impression had occurred late in the pregnancy after the trachea would have been formed.
17. Her 3-year-old boy had his penis bitten by a dog with resulting backward	Glans penis congenitally bent with urethra looking backwards	"Early state of pregnancy"	Not stated	Cargill (1877)	The pregnant mother "was very much alarmed at the time." Cargill saw

Table 3-2 *(continued)*

Impressing Stimulus to Mother	*Lesion on Baby*	*Duration of Pregnancy at Time of Stimulus*	*Mother Feared Baby Would Be Affected*	*Reference*	*Comments*
bending of the glans and distal urethra					both the injured child and the baby with the defective penis.
18. Saw a beggar on the street with only a stump of one arm, ending at the humerus	Absent forearm with a rudimentary hand having "only two or three fingers" articulated with the humerus	During 1st trimester	Not stated	Ferreau (1909)	The mother was extremely affected by the sight of the beggar and later attributed her child's malformation to this stimulus.
19. Examined brother's genitalia after he had had his penis amputated because of carcinoma	Congenital absence of penis	Not stated, but early in pregnancy	No	Owen (1863)	The mother said that after seeing her brother's operated penis, "her mind was unceasingly engaged with reflecting and sympathizing upon the forlorn conditon of her brother." Owen, who examined uncle and nephew, stated "that the appearances [of their affected

					organs] are as similar in all respects as possibly could be." Owen stated that apart from the absence of the penis the genital organs were normal and the baby was otherwise "well formed."
20. Husband shot through the left chest; mother saw husband's wounds soon after he was wounded	Red, elevated nevi on left side of back and front of chest	2 months	Yes	Mastin (1898)	The mother expected the baby would have a "bloody face," because she had put her hands to her face when they were covered with her husband's blood. Mastin saw the husband's wounds and the baby's nevi, which were not at exactly the same sites as the wounds on her husband, but close to these sites.
21. Husband wounded by bullet through upper part of both	"Appearance of cicatrices upon its [the baby's] thighs	Not stated	Not stated	Taylor (1876)	

Table 3-2 *(continued)*

Impressing Stimulus to Mother	*Lesion on Baby*	*Duration of Pregnancy at Time of Stimulus*	*Mother Feared Baby Would Be Affected*	*Reference*	*Comments*
thighs; mother dressed his wounds during her pregnancy	similarly situated to those of its father"				
22. Saw operation on an old woman for closure of an enormous umbilical hernia	"An umbilical hernia that was proportional, for its size, to that of the old woman operated on" (my translation)	2 months	Not stated	Lacambre (1906)	The operation took place in the patient's home in a village. The pregnant mother-to-be, determined to see the operation, sneaked into the house, furtively opened the door of the "operating room," and took a look at the scene of the operation. Overcome by emotion, she fled to the garden, where she fainted. She had previously given birth to two normal babies.
23. Saw, after an automobile accident, her	Red-violet telangiectasis "occupying	2.5 months	Not stated	Troisfontaines (1909)	The mother was thrown out of the

husband's injured face covered with blood on the right lower lip, right cheek, and neck below the right ear	exactly the entire area" where blood had covered her husband on the face and neck (my translation)				car at the time of the accident, and she thought that her husband had been more seriously injured than he was.
24. Son fell and wounded himself on the forehead	Birthmark at site of older brother's wound on forehead	2 months	Not clear	Drzewiecki (1891)	The mother was greatly disturbed by the older child's injury. Drzewiecki observed both the wounded child and the subsequently born baby.
25. *Left* thumb of her 5-year-old son crushed by closing door; the thumb was swollen and ecchymotic beneath the nail	*Right* thumb was swollen and ecchymotic beneath the nail. Left thumb had a slight ecchymosis beneath the nail	8 months	No	Swift (1886)	Swift examined the injured child and the newborn baby. The thumbnails of both children came off within about 24 hours of each other. New and perfect nails then formed on both thumbs.
26. Saw husband's face and neck immediately after he had been slapped on face and	"Distinct mark [presumably nevus flammeus] of four bloody fingers on	4 months	Not stated	Lee (1891)	When mother saw her husband's face, she thought his throat had been cut, and

Table 3-2 *(continued)*

Impressing Stimulus to Mother	*Lesion on Baby*	*Duration of Pregnancy at Time of Stimulus*	*Mother Feared Baby Would Be Affected*	*Reference*	*Comments*
neck by four bloody fingers that left blood on his face and neck	its neck and face"				she fainted.
27. Saw large birthmark (port-wine stain) on face of a woman passed in the street	Large port-wine stain on left cheek and neck	1 month	No	Liébeault (1892)	Upon seeing the woman with the large port-wine stain on her face, the mother became extremely shocked; thereafter and throughout her pregnancy she hallucinated that other persons whom she passed on the street also had port-wine stains on their faces. Although the mother did not say before the birth of the child that it would be marked, she did express this belief when, after the baby's birth, attendants

					delayed in showing her the baby because of its birthmark.
28. Mother frequently exposed to cancerous tumor that her mother had "on her brow between the eyes"	"Naevus or varicose aneurism, which projected out between the eyes to the size of a cherry"	1st trimester	Not stated	Taylor (1882)	The mother said she frequently looked at her mother's tumor with "painful anxiety" and was "much worried about it."
29. Her 2-year-old son cut his upper lip severely with scissors so that, in effect, a cleft lip had to be repaired; a scar remained	Linear scar on upper lip at same site as scar on older brother's lip	6 months	Not stated	Saunders (1877)	Saunders delivered both babies, and he repaired the cut lip of the older boy.
30. Watched circumcision of her 3-year-old son	Congenital absence of foreskin	6 weeks	Not stated	Harvey (1888)	Harvey stated that the boy "was as perfectly circumcised as the child upon whom I had operated; even the scars from the sutures were reproduced in the exact number and location of

Table 3-2 *(continued)*

Impressing Stimulus to Mother	*Lesion on Baby*	*Duration of Pregnancy at Time of Stimulus*	*Mother Feared Baby Would Be Affected*	*Reference*	*Comments*
					those on the organ of the boy upon whom I had operated." Lowrey (1888) published a skeptical comment on this case, emphasizing, like many authors before and after him, the lack of any known process whereby images in the mind of a pregnant woman could affect a fetus in her uterus.
31. Saw husband's left forearm and hand after they had been "terribly lacerated by a cotton-gin," so that the hand was "hanging down"	"The left hand was badly twisted on the wrist, the first phalangeal bone of the thumb missing, and the fore and middle fingers grown together"	6 months	Not stated	Ramsey (1880)	The mother-to-be was "terribly frightened" at the sight of her husband and saw him "but a short time." Before and after this pregnancy she gave birth to two normal babies. Ramsey saw both the

					injured man and the defective baby.
32. Saw husband after a mule had kicked him "in the mouth...knocking all of his upper front teeth out, and dividing the upper lip on each side of the nose in front of the eye-teeth"	"Hare-lip [cleft lip] on both sides, with fissures extending on both sides entirely back through the soft palate, and communicating throughout with the cavity of the nose"	5 months	Not stated	Frix (1881)	The mother-to-be said that when she saw her husband after he had been injured, "her own upper lip [felt] as though something very strange was the matter with it." Frix stated that he saw the husband soon after he was injured, "and there was a very complete resemblance between the wounded mouth of the father and the deformed mouth of the child."
33. Frightened by a mouse, which "jumped out at her feet, causing a sudden shock,...she involuntarily placed her hand on the top of her head"	Oval patch of hyperpigmentation at top of head	Not stated	Yes	Mackay (1891)	Before she saw her baby, the mother asked whether it had a mark at the top of its head. The patch of abnormally pigmented skin was "in the exact spot" where

Table 3-2 *(continued)*

Impressing Stimulus to Mother	*Lesion on Baby*	*Duration of Pregnancy at Time of Stimulus*	*Mother Feared Baby Would Be Affected*	*Reference*	*Comments*
					she had placed her hand when the mouse had frightened her.
34. Saw a young man "run over by a cart; the shaft ran into his right groin, and the wheels passed over both legs, fracturing them. When he was carried away, she distinctly saw a dab of blood on the back of each hand, probably left there by the person who lifted him"	"Both legs between the knee and ankle were constricted, raw, and bleeding, and looked as though an ineffectual attempt had been made to cut them off, by tying a rope tightly round each; there was half an inch of cicatrisation at the margin of the raw surface. There was also a large, partly raw, partly cicatrised surface, in the region of the right groin, about the size of a hand. And on the back of each hand was a red stain of the skin,	3 months	Not stated	G. R. Moore (1886)	Moore stated that the baby, which he examined, "was otherwise sound and healthy."

	like a bloody finger-mark"				
35. Repeatedly observed a workman with a hook attached to stump of right arm, which had been amputated at the elbow	"Right arm ending in a stump at the elbow exactly like that of the laborer"	Not stated	Not stated	Fenwick (1891)	The sight of the affected man "excited...much sympathy in the mother." "She was of a very nervous and sympathetic nature."
36. Frightened by seeing a one-legged man	Congenital absence of leg below middle of the thigh	Not stated	Yes	Rawlins (1881)	Rawlins's brief report did not state whether the affected leg was on the same side as the absent leg in the man whose deformity had frightened the mother.
37. Saw a young man who had a permanently extended middle finger of one hand (resulting from an accident). The man worked at a shop opposite the	Greatly hypertrophied middle finger of left hand	Throughout pregnancy	Yes	Dominici (1909)	Dominici did not state on which hand the young man had the extended middle finger. The stiff, long finger of the young man had "obsessed" the

Table 3-2 *(continued)*

Impressing Stimulus to Mother	*Lesion on Baby*	*Duration of Pregnancy at Time of Stimulus*	*Mother Feared Baby Would Be Affected*	*Reference*	*Comments*
mother, who saw him repeatedly					mother, who several times during her pregnancy expressed the fear that her baby would have a similar birth defect.
38. Heard of accident in which man had had his *right* hand completely severed accidentally except for a small portion of the thumb	Congenital absence of the *left* hand except for a rudiment of the thumb	2 months	Not stated	Crickmay (1886)	The mother felt "sorrow" when she learned of the accident to the man, and subsequently was "much distressed" when she herself told other persons about it. Crickmay saw both the injured man and the baby's birth defect. The mother did not see the injured man herself, but was told about the injury.
39. Heard description of operation for	Congenital absence of foreskin	2 months	Not stated; but *father* expected	Goodell (1871)	The description of the operation "made

circumcision

an effect on the baby

so great an impression on the lady, that for several days it was the constant burden of her thoughts and conversation."

Goodell, who delivered the baby, stated that "the retracted prepuce actually showed the yet granulating cicatrix of what looked like a very recent circumcision."

D. Turner (1714/1731, p. 172) described (at secondhand) a closely similar case in which a woman in the 8th month of pregnancy "listen'd very attentively to a Guest in her House, who discoursed and exactly described the Manner of the *Jewish* Circumcision." She "was delivr'd of a Son...with his Foreskin cut and inverted."

Table 3-2 *(continued)*

Impressing Stimulus to Mother	*Lesion on Baby*	*Duration of Pregnancy at Time of Stimulus*	*Mother Feared Baby Would Be Affected*	*Reference*	*Comments*
40. Heard about man, a near neighbor, whose left hand was badly mangled in an industrial accident. Surgical operation required amputation of the three middle metacarpal bones and their associated phalanges	Malformation of left hand identical to that of the injured man's hand after operation. The hand had only the thumb and little finger. The three middle metacarpal bones were also absent	6 months	No	Lagache (1908)	The mother and the injured man lived about 100 meters apart. The mother heard about the accident and surgical operation, but said she had not been particularly affected by the news. The mother was well known to physicians as neurotic and had been diagnosed as having hysteria. Before the affected child the mother had given birth to seven entirely normal children. This case was published with more detail than any previous case. The report included photographs of the injured man's hand

					after the operation and of the child's hand, as well as x-ray photographs of both the affected hands.
41. Husband cruelly pressed his elbow on her hand until she fainted; fingers afterward "much swollen and very painful for several days"	"On the left hand, the first and second phalanges of all the fingers and the thumb were absent, looking as if they had been amputated"	1 month	No	Barker (1887, p. 168)	Barker did not say that he had seen the hand of the mother after her husband injured it. He also did not state which of the mother's hands her husband had injured.
42. Had her ears pierced again and began to wear earrings, which she had not recently done	Holes in both earlobes at birth	Not stated precisely, but within first 2 months	Yes	A. M. Brown (1886)	"Fears for safety of the child troubled her [the mother] until delivery."
43. Accidental contact of a sunfish with her leg	Pigmented nevus in shape of sunfish at site where sunfish had come in contact with mother's leg. In adulthood nevus was 12 centimeters by 3.5 centimeters	4-5 months	No	Gardiner (1898)	Mother was shocked and "for the moment completely unnerved" by the unexpected contact with the fish, but afterward thought little about the inci-

Table 3-2 *(continued)*

Impressing Stimulus to Mother	*Lesion on Baby*	*Duration of Pregnancy at Time of Stimulus*	*Mother Feared Baby Would Be Affected*	*Reference*	*Comments*
					dent. Gardiner published a photograph of the nevus. Both the mother, during her pregnancy, and the daughter born with the birthmark had a strong craving to eat sunfish.
44. Had her right kidney removed during the 8th month of pregnancy. Mother had seen her wound smeared with iodine and touched with lapis along the line of wound closure	Nevus in region of right kidney with straight, almost black line, about 2.5 centimeters long, nearly corresponding to the place of the wound closure	8 months	Not stated	Formijne (1915)	Formijne observed both the wound on the mother and the birthmark on her baby.
45. Underwent a laparotomy during the 3rd month of pregnancy	Linear birthmark on the skin of the abdomen resembling the scar of an incision	3 months	Not clear	Formijne (1915)	After the baby's birth the mother was sure that its birthmark derived from the wound on her

					abdomen. The report does not say that she expressed this fear earlier.
46. Had been severely burned on the chest 9 years before her pregnancy; she had lost the whole of her right breast and part of the left one	Skin of upper chest, especially right side, abnormally white, rigid and slightly puckered	Throughout pregnancy	Yes	Ballantyne (1891-92)	Ballantyne wrote: "...the patient had, during her pregnancy, the firm belief that her infant would be deformed, although the accident to herself had taken place nine years previously."
47. Was bitten by a dog on the right leg during the 7th month of pregnancy	"Reddish scar" under the right knee	7 months	Yes	Ballantyne (1891-92)	The mother's wound had been cauterized and had suppurated afterward. Immediately after the baby's birth "the mother asked anxiously if there was anything the matter with the child's right leg."
48. Saw woman with large nevus flammeus on nose and cheek; slapped herself on	Red birthmark on right buttock, about 4 centimeters by 5 centimeters	4 months	Yes	Prentiss (1882)	This was a deliberate attempt to divert an expected birthmark

Table 3-2 *(continued)*

Impressing Stimulus to Mother	*Lesion on Baby*	*Duration of Pregnancy at Time of Stimulus*	*Mother Feared Baby Would Be Affected*	*Reference*	*Comments*
buttock and said her baby would be marked there instead of on the face					from the facial area.
49. Frustrated craving to eat oysters	Large birthmark in shape of oyster on the buttock	Not stated	Yes	C. D. Miller (1881)	The mother, fearing that her baby would have a mark, tried to divert the mark by clapping her hand on her buttock. I discuss in the text later and give examples of birthmarks stimulated by a frustrated craving for some food.
50. Saw man with large nevus on face; rubbed herself on external aspect of upper right thigh	Nevus on external aspect of upper right thigh	1-2 months	Yes	Leclerc-Montmoyen (1949)	Leclerc-Montmoyen suggested to the frightened pregnant woman the attempt to divert the expected nevus from the face to the thigh by vigorously rubbing her thigh.

Table 3-3 **Types of Stimuli Figuring in Cases of Maternal Impressions of Table 3-2**

Nature of Stimulus to Pregnant Woman	*Cases of Table 3-2 in this Group*	*Number of Cases in this Group*
1. Woman an eyewitness of another person's being wounded	2,7,9,22,23,30,34	7
2. Woman saw an injured (or operated upon) person soon after the wounding[a]	1,5,12,14,15,17,19, 20,21,24,25,26,29, 31,32	15
3. Woman heard about the mutilation of (or operation on) another person	38,39,40	3
4. Woman was mutilated herself or underwent surgery	41,42,44,45,46,47	6
5. Woman saw a person with a birth defect or major postnatal defect, e.g., the stump of an amputated arm	3,4,6,8,10,11,13,16, 18,27,35,36,37, 48,50	15
6. Woman saw a person with a lesion that was not congenital, accidental, or postoperative	28	1
7. Other kinds of stimuli	33,43,49	3

[a]Unless the report of the case explicitly states that the pregnant woman was an eyewitness of the wounding, I have assumed that she saw the wound only soon afterward.

In 22 cases (Groups 1 and 2 summed together) the mother either was an eyewitness of another person's mutilation (criminal, accidental, or surgical) or saw the afflicted person soon after the mutilation. In another 3 cases (Group 3) the mother heard about the mutilation of another person; and in 6 (Group 4) she was herself wounded (accidentally or surgically). To these cases we may add 3 more from Group 5 in which amputations accompanied or followed injuries. Thus violence—surgery is a kind of violence, but one to which the involved parties agree—figured in 34 (68%) of these 50 cases. In Chapter 2 I showed that violence is prominent in the physical changes that sometimes accompany both the revival of memories and concentrated attention on another person's suffering, such as that of Jesus. Violence also figures prominently in the cases of the children who remember previous lives and in the occurrence of birthmarks and birth defects in these children.

Duration of Pregnant Woman's Exposure to the Stimulus

The duration of the apparent stimulus for the maternal impression varied widely. In several cases the pregnant mother had the stimulus under view throughout much or all of her pregnancy. This would naturally be true in those instances where a stimulating injury with a resulting scar or deformity occurred

to a member of the mother's own family, say her husband, another child, a close neighbor, or herself. (Cases 35 and 37 are examples of such repeated viewing by the mother-to-be.) Suringar (1927) reported a case in this group (one not included in Table 3-2). He learned about it from the mother of the affected child. When she was in the 6th month of her first pregnancy, a neighbor became seriously ill, and in order to help this person she brought one of the neighbor's children—a 10-year-old girl—to stay in her house. This child had had her hand caught in a laundry mangle and had lost part of one of the middle fingers of the left hand. The mother-to-be often worked alongside the child when there was housework to do, and she thus frequently had occasion to see the child's mutilated hand. Her son of this pregnancy was born with the middle finger of the left hand absent. Suringar's informant believed that her frequent viewing of the child's mutilated hand—over a period of some time—was the cause of her son's defect, all the more because no other member of her or her husband's family had had any such defect.

However, in some cases the mother seems to have had only a fleeting glance at the stimulating lesion. This was true in Liébeault's (1892) case (Case 27 of Table 3-2); and it was certainly true in Lacambre's (1906) case (Case 22), in which the pregnant woman barely glimpsed the scene where another woman was being operated on for a large umbilical hernia. In G. R. Moore's (1886) case (Case 34) the young man run over by a cart must have been transported from the scene quickly so that the pregnant woman would have only seen his wounds briefly. Carreras (1910) described a case (also not included in Table 3-2) in which a young boy was knocked down by a cart and his head wounded so that his scalp required extensive stitching. His mother, then less than 2 months pregnant, later accompanied her son to the hospital and was present when his wound was dressed. She wanted to keep her eyes closed so that she would not see the wound, but could not prevent herself from taking a quick glance at it. The sight profoundly disturbed her. When, 7 months later, she gave birth to her baby, a daughter, it was immediately noticed that the baby had an area of hairlessness on the left parietal region of the scalp at the site where her brother had been wounded. Carreras, who examined the girl, stated that the affected hairless area measured 1 centimeter in width and about 6 centimeters in length; it closely resembled the residue of a healed wound.

The duration of the mother's exposure to the stimulus seems to be less important than its effect on her and also less important than any tendency she may have to dwell on the memory of the stimulus later.

Emotional Reaction of the Pregnant Woman to the Stimulus

In the column of Comments in Table 3-2 I have mentioned observations included in the reports about the pregnant woman's emotional state after seeing (or learning about) the stimulus. In most instances the woman was

described as "frightened" or "shocked," and where such adjectives are missing in the reports they can often be reasonably conjectured by considering the usual feelings that a woman would have when someone like her husband or child is seriously injured.

Some of the women became obsessed with the stimulus and could not stop thinking about it. In several of the cases included in Table 3-2 the mother became intensely preoccupied with the memory of the stimulus, and in that of Liébeault (1892) the woman affected actually hallucinated the original stimulus (a port-wine stain) appearing on other persons whom she saw in the street (Case 27). However, other women seemed to have dismissed the stimulus from their minds and related it to a lesion in the baby only after the baby was born.

Curiosity appears to have been the dominant condition in three women who figured in a small epidemic of cleft lip that occurred in Belgium in the late 19th century (Theyskens, 1881). A woman who was in the first weeks of a pregnancy happened to see someone with an unrepaired cleft lip. She was greatly disturbed by the sight of this person and went to see Theyskens, telling him that she was firmly convinced that her baby would have a cleft lip. Theyskens tried unavailingly to reassure her. In fact, her baby was born with a cleft lip. The matter was much discussed in the area, and several pregnant neighbors came to see the new baby for themselves. As a result, according to Theyskens, some months later he had to repair three more cleft lips of babies born to these curious neighbors of the first affected baby. A similar, although less numerous spread of maternal impressions occurred in the cases cited by Elliotson (1852) (Cases 7 and 8 of Table 3-2).

The Mother's Expectation of an Effect from the Stimulus

The beliefs of the pregnant women as to the effects of the stimuli on the babies varied widely. Some were unshakeably convinced that their babies would be damaged, others equally sure that there would be no effect from the stimulus.

Table 3-2 shows that in eight of the listed cases the mother did *not* expect to have a defective baby after she had an apparently affecting impression; in other cases the report does not state whether the mother expected the baby to be affected, and I think we can assume that in some, perhaps in most, of these cases the mother also had no such fear.

In Cases 48-50 the mother feared having a baby with a birthmark and tried, with apparent success, to divert it from an exposed part of the body to a place where it would not ordinarily be seen. These cases to some extent resemble those of experimental birthmarks that I describe in a later section of this work.

On the whole, the cases of Table 3-2 support Dabney's (1890) judgment (based on a larger sample) that the mother's opinion about whether the baby will be affected indicates poorly what will in fact happen to the baby.

Pertinent Observations about the Pregnant Woman's Personality

The authors of the reports of these cases that I have studied concerned themselves almost exclusively with the correspondences in time and appearance (mainly anatomical location) between the stimulus and the mark or defect on the later-born child. Most of them obviously, and probably all of them, believed that a maternal impression could affect an embryo or a fetus; otherwise they would not have taken the trouble to record the cases they reported. Only a few of them seemed aware of the possibility—and commented on it—that certain women might be more susceptible to maternal impressions than others. Their reports, therefore, contain almost no discriminating information on this aspect of the cases. In a few of the reports we are told, for example, that the woman was "known to be, at all times, very nervous and easily alarmed" (Case 4; Montgomery, 1857) or that she had been diagnosed as having hysteria (Case 40; Lagache, 1908). These, however, are exceptional; most of the reports convey little or nothing pertinent to this topic.

Period of the Pregnancy When the Stimulus Occurred

For an analysis of the trimester of pregnancy when the stimulus occurred I increased the sample by adding an additional 85 cases to the 50 cases of Table 3-2. These additional cases were drawn (with a few exceptions) from the same sources—medical journals and monographs—as the first 50. They included some of the commoner birth defects, such as simple cleft lip, which I had excluded from Table 3-2. The results of the analysis are shown in Table 3-4. The difference in the incidences of the stimuli between the 1st trimester and the other 2 trimesters is statistically significant ($p < .001$). I think it is also medically significant, because we can safely assume that a pregnant woman would be equally likely to encounter a stimulus of the kind we are considering in one trimester as in either of the oth-

Table 3-4 **Trimester of Pregnancy during which Mother-to-be Received Stimulus of Maternal Impression**

	(N = 135)			
	1st Trimester	*2nd Trimester*	*3rd Trimester*	*Not stated*
No. of instances of stimulus occurring during this trimester	80	20	13	22
	$\chi^2 = 71.9$. df = 2. $p < .001$.			

Note: Cases for which the stimulus was noted as occurring "early in pregnancy" were counted in the 1st trimester, as were two cases in which the stimulus occurred before the woman became pregnant. When estimates crossed the boundaries between trimesters, the cases were assigned to the later trimester, e.g., an estimate of "3-4 months" was assigned to the 2nd trimester.

ers. The 1st trimester is that in which the main features of the limbs and organs are developed. During it the embryo-fetus is more sensitive to the teratogenic influence of infections and noxious drugs or toxins than it is in later trimesters. One would expect the 1st trimester to be also the period of greatest sensitivity to psychical influences.

However, several of the birthmarks and six of the birth defects corresponded to stimuli experienced by the mother in the 2nd or 3rd trimester of her pregnancy. The cases reported by Thompson (1878) (Case 16) and Lagache (1908) (Case 40) are particularly interesting in this respect. By the time of the mother's receiving the stimulus the organ in the baby that corresponded to the stimulus would, in ordinary embryological development, have been fully formed.[11]

Unusualness of the Birth Defects and Their Correspondence to the Stimuli

As I mentioned earlier, I deliberately selected many of the cases listed in Table 3-2 because the lesions were *not* those commonly occurring as birth defects. I wished thereby to neutralize, at least for these cases, Müller's (1840-42) objection that the lesions attributed to maternal impressions belong to the common types of birth defects and correspond little to the stimuli alleged to be their causes.

The correspondence between stimulus and lesion seems to be exact or extremely close in 46 (92%) of the 50 cases.This is an even higher proportion of correspondences than Dabney (1890) found; as I mentioned earlier, he considered that stimulus and lesion corresponded closely in 69 (77%) of 90 cases.[12]

In two cases (Cases 25 and 38) a limb of the baby was affected in a manner corresponding to the stimulus, but on the side opposite to that of the stimulus. (This may have happened in other cases, such as Cases 7, 12, 13, 36, and 37, for which the reports do not specify the side of an injury or defect on the person seen by the woman.)

In Case 41, the woman's hand appears to have been seriously injured by her husband, but there was apparently no residual defect, such as occurred in her baby's brachydactyly. In Case 18, the man who impressed the pregnant woman had a stump of an arm, presumably from an amputation; her baby had rudimentary fingers developing from the upper arm.

Nearly all the lesions of the babies are rare, and a small number are extremely so. Indeed, a few may be unique among birth defects. I include among the group of extremely rare congenital lesions the tracheal sinus of Case 16, the marks of four bloody fingers on a face of Case 26, the absent middle digits and metacarpal bones of Case 40, the unusual syndrome of constrictions of the legs, a raw cicatrized area

[11]This problem arises also in connection with some of the cases of the reincarnation type that I describe in later chapters.

[12]Eleven of the 50 cases in Table 3-2 also appeared in Dabney's (1890) inventory of cases.

of the groin, and red marks on the backs of the hands of Case 34, the absence of the penis of Case 19, and the absence of a single metacarpal bone of Case 2.

For some of the birth defects figuring in these cases we have reports of their incidence that seem to me adequately reliable. In Table 3-5 I have given figures

Table 3-5 **Incidences of Some of the Birth Defects Figuring in Cases of Maternal Impressions**

Birth Defect	*Reported Incidence at Birth*	*Source of Data on Incidence*	*Cases Having this Defect (Case Number in Table 3-2)*
1. Umbilical hernia	1 in 23,413	Wilde (1843) (Austria)	Case 22
2. Absence of the penis	1 in 30,000,000 No figures of incidence, but only 15 cases reported up to 1951	Harris (1898) (U.S.A) Campbell (1951) (U.S.A.)	Case 19
3. Unilateral absence of forearm	1 in 22,000	Birch-Jensen (1949) (Denmark)	Cases 8,9,18, and 35
4. Unilateral absence of hand	1 in 65,000	Birch-Jensen (1949) (Denmark)	Cases 1,7,12, and 38
5. Thyroglossal sinus	"never congenital" "rarely congenital" In a series of 310 cases, none had been noted at birth	Bland-Sutton (1903) (England) Bailey (1929) (England) Marshall and Becker (1949) (U.S.A.)	Case 16
6. Anotia (absence of external ear)	No figures of incidence, but only seven cases reported up to 1948	Ružić (1948) (Yugoslavia)	Case 13
7. Cleft lip with cleft palate	1 in 2,100 1 in 2,100	Wilde (1843) (Austria) MacMahon and McKeown (1953) (England)	Case 32
8. Ectrodactyly (absence of one or more fingers)	1 in 90,000	Birch-Jensen (1949) (Denmark)	Cases 2,4,5, and 40
9. Brachydactyly	1 in 40,000	Birch-Jensen (1949) (Denmark)	Cases 10 and 41

for several of the pertinent incidences. Readers can see that with the exception of cleft lip all the listed birth defects are rare, and most are extremely rare. The incidence of cases may be somewhat higher than the available figures suggest, because some cases of ordinarily hidden birth defects, such as absence of the penis, may never come to medical attention and hence would not figure in counts of medical reports. However, Wilde (1843) included information from all (or nearly all) births in the Imperial Lying-In Hospital of Vienna over a period of 8 years; and Birch-Jensen (1949) included in his survey of defects of the upper limbs the entire population of Denmark.

Rare as many of the pertinent birth defects are, their infrequency is only part of what we need to consider in appraising the likelihood that a maternal impression has caused a birth defect (or birthmark). We need also to consider how common is the mother's experience to which the defect is attributed. For the frequencies of this side of the case I can offer no figures. However, although some of the stimulating experiences, such as seeing on the street someone with a port-wine stain, are fairly common, others are surely extremely rare. It must be most unusual for a woman to examine the site where a man's penis has been surgically amputated (Case 19) and unusual also for a person to have his face and neck slapped with a bloody hand leaving the red impressions of four fingers on the face and neck (Case 26).

The Pregnant Woman's State of Consciousness When Stimulated

In all the cases included in Table 3-2 the mother of the apparently affected baby was awake when she was stimulated by the injury or deformity that corresponded to that of her later-born baby. However, two cases have been reported in which a mother dreamed of some injury, and a corresponding malformation occurred in her later-born child. Hammond (1868) described the case of a woman who dreamed during her pregnancy—Hammond did not say how far advanced the pregnancy was—that she saw a man who had lost part of the external ear.[13] When her child was born, "a portion of one ear was deficient, and the organ was exactly like the defective ear she had seen in her dream." Hammond added: "I have examined this child, and the ear looks exactly as if a portion had been cut off with a sharp knife" (Hammond, 1868, p. 19). In the second case of this type a baby was delivered and immediately found not to have the great toe of the right foot. On learning this the baby's mother said that during the 4th month of her pregnancy she had dreamed that a rat had bitten off the great toe of her right foot. The impression was so vivid "that she awoke screaming, and narrated the cause of her fright to her husband, who corroborated her statement" (Brydon, 1886, p. 670).

[13]This dream resembles the "announcing dreams" of the cases suggestive of reincarnation that form the main body of this work. In a few of these dreams the appearing figure has shown to the dreamer (usually the subject's mother) wounds that correspond to birthmarks on her later-born baby.

I present next cases of birth defects attributed to an impression or idea in a pregnant woman that have come directly under my observation.

THE CASE OF CALVIN EWING

Calvin Ewing was born on January 28, 1969, in a hospital of Los Angeles, California. His parents were John Ewing and his wife, Sylvia Hirst Ewing. Calvin was their first child, and they subsequently had a daughter, Harriet, who was born on August 12, 1971.

Immediately after Calvin's birth his mother noticed that he had a small sinus near the medial aspect of his right eye at exactly the site where she herself had a similar sinus. Hers corresponded to a stye, or the residue of a stye, in a deceased woman, Julia Ford, of whom she was thought to be the reincarnation. (I report her case later in this work.) Calvin's sinus had no such known or conjectured antecedent from a previous life. The only identified cause for it seems to have been his mother's intense fear, during her pregnancy, that her baby would have a sinus like hers.

I was able to examine Calvin and learn other details of his case when I met Sylvia and her family in Whittier, California, on May 24, 1973. (I had earlier met Sylvia in Alaska, first in 1965, when I studied her case.)

Sylvia Hirst Ewing's Fear about Her Baby during Her Pregnancy

In the report of Sylvia's own case I shall mention that her small sinus caused her considerable embarrassment as well as some physical discomfort when she was a child. These effects of her defect may have contributed to her fear that her first baby would have a similar sinus. In 1973 she said to me:

> I remember thinking whether he would have a deformity in his eye. When I first got pregnant, I began to think of what he [her baby] would look like. I was afraid he would look like me. That is all I thought about—whether he would look like me.
>
> When they first brought Calvin to me after [his] birth, that was the first place—the eye—that I looked at to see if he had the hole. In a way I was excited that he had something that I had.
>
> My thoughts about Calvin having the hole varied during [my] pregnancy. At times I thought he would not inherit it, and then I thought he would.

Sylvia's husband, John Ewing, confirmed that she had been intensely concerned about the possibility that the baby might have a sinus like hers. He said:

> She was always worrying about whether Calvin would have a hole in the eye like hers. That was one of the first things she told me when I went to see them after he was born—that he had a hole by the eye.

Additional Information

Sylvia had no announcing dream before or during her pregnancy with Calvin, and he was not identified with any deceased person who might have reincarnated. In her statement that I have cited above she used the pronoun *he*, but I think that was with the knowledge (at the time she was talking) that she had had a baby boy; she did not mean to say that she had expected that her first baby would be a boy instead of a girl.

Up to the time of my meeting with Sylvia and her (marital) family in 1973, Calvin had never spoken about a previous life. He was then 4 years and 4 months old.

In 1971 Sylvia gave birth to a daughter, Harriet. During her pregnancy with Harriet, Sylvia had no concern about this baby also having a sinus like hers and Calvin's. She said:

> I never thought of it [the possibility of a sinus in the new baby] when I became pregnant with Harriet. I thought it would not happen twice. I thought she could not have it.

John Ewing agreed that Sylvia's attitude was different with her second pregnancy. He said: "With Harriet she did not worry."

I examined Harriet's eyes and she had no sinus.

Calvin's Birth Defect

Figure 3-4 shows the sinus opening near Calvin's right eye. It is at exactly the same site as the sinus near Sylvia's right eye (Figure 3-5) although his defect was somewhat smaller than hers. (The photographs of these figures were taken by a professional photographer in September 1972.)

Unlike his mother's sinus, Calvin's apparently had no connection with the conjunctival sac. It did not drain, even when he cried. He had once had a stye, but not at the site of his sinus.

Comment

At the beginning of this work I identified it as in part an attempt to go beyond the use of such words as *chance* and *coincidence* in understanding individual features of a person's physical form. If we follow this rule, we must look for other explanations of Calvin's sinus, and I can think of only three.

First, Calvin might be the reincarnation of an unidentified person who, like Julia Ford, had a sinus at the inner aspect of the right eye before he or she died. However, there is no other evidence in Calvin's case that suggests reincarnation. Bringing in reincarnation here seems like smuggling in the idea of coincidence again, with the addition of reincarnation.

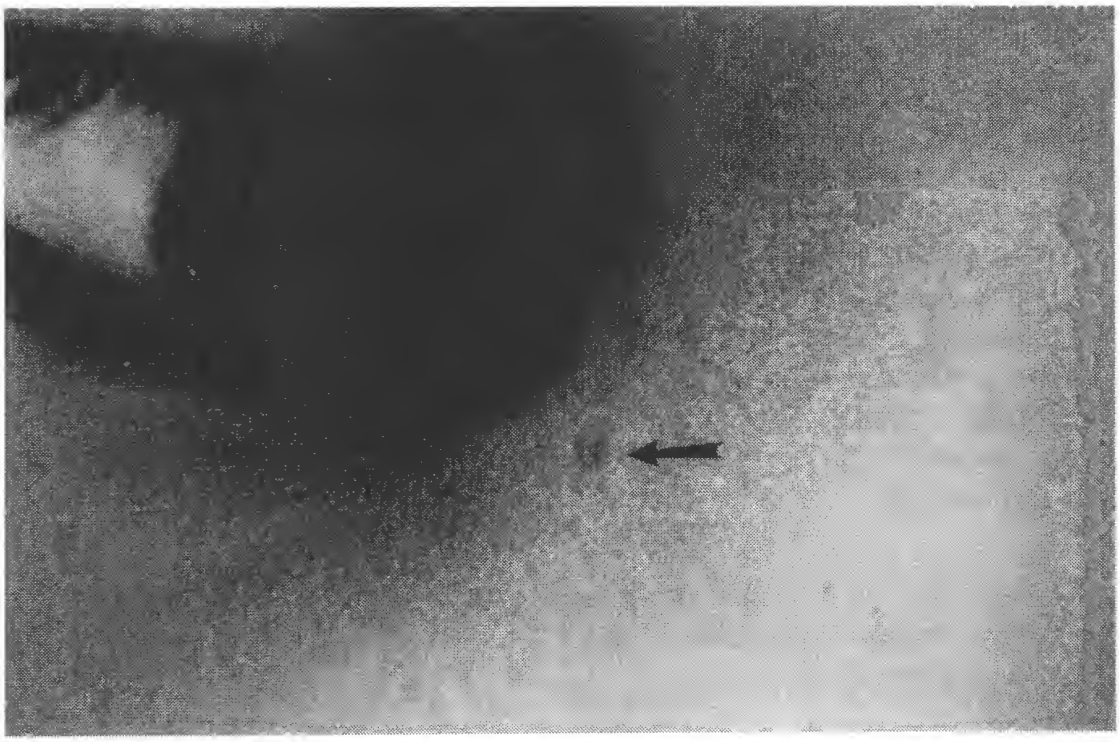

Figure 3-4 Congenital sinus near the medial end of the right eye of Calvin Ewing as it appeared in September 1972, when he was 3½ years old.

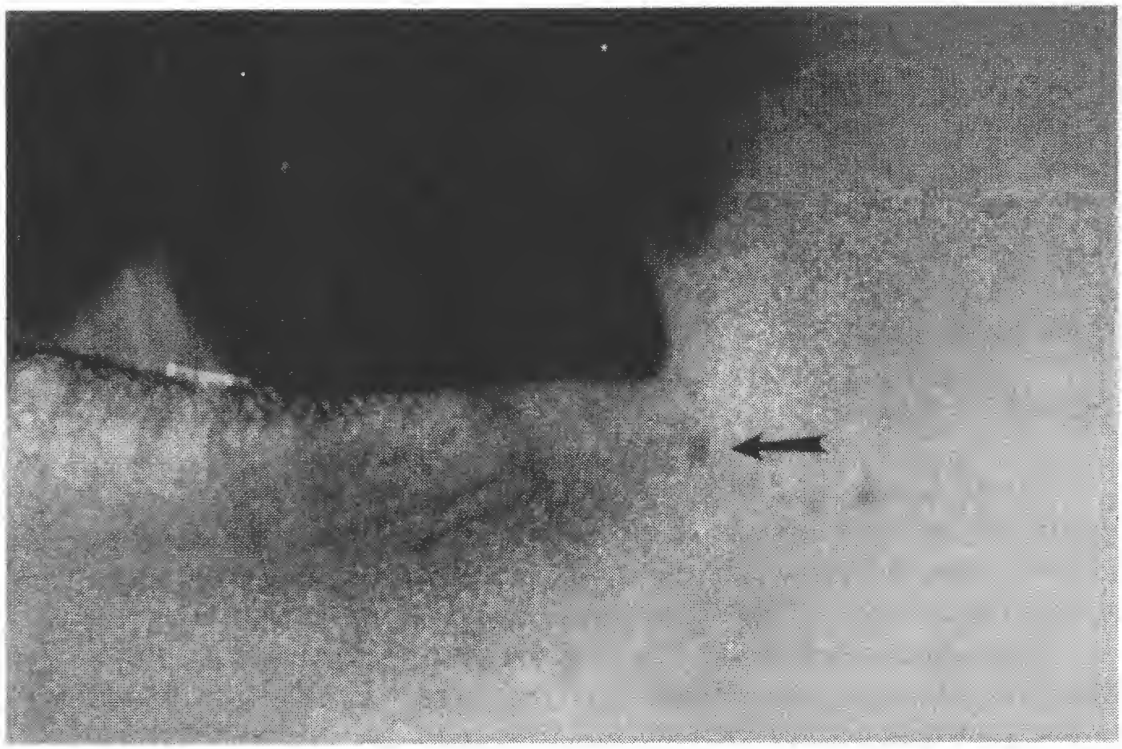

Figure 3-5 Congenital sinus near the medial end of the right eye of Sylvia Ewing as it appeared in September 1972, when she was 23 years old.

Second, it is possible that Sylvia's sinus might have resulted from a spontaneous hitherto unknown mutation, which she then passed on to Calvin. If this happened, the case would be unique in my experience. That may be because of insufficient follow-up of the subjects of these cases and their progeny. We should want to ask, however, what had caused the "spontaneous" mutation. Could this have been a "psychic force?" Anyone who adopts a paranormal explanation for some of the cases, especially those whose subjects have major birth defects, acknowledges a "psychic force" that, in principle, could also produce significant changes in the affected person's genome. I shall cite later in this chapter three instances in which a birth defect apparently due to a maternal impression became transmitted to the descendants of the first affected person.

The third interpretation, which is the one I favor myself, is that of a maternal impression. According to it, Calvin's sinus resulted from the strong fear Sylvia had during her pregnancy with him that he would have a sinus like hers. From her own description, her fear was accompanied by an image of what he would look like, and she even experienced a touch of pleasure when he turned out to be like her. The image in her mind of his future physical appearance was "strong" enough to affect that appearance. In Table 3-2 I included several cases, notably two (Cases 46 and 47) that Ballantyne (1891-92) reported, in which a pregnant woman feared that a wound she had received would be reproduced on her baby, and this seems to have happened.

THE CASE OF ASTRIDE STEVAUX

Astride Stevaux was born in Saverne, Alsace, France, on June 6, 1956. Her parents were André Stevaux and his wife, Antoinette. Astride was the first of their three children—all daughters.

When Astride was born, she was immediately found to have a major birth defect of her left hand. Its three middle fingers were markedly underdeveloped in both length and volume, although they did have small nails at their ends (Figure 3-6). The thumb and fifth finger of Astride's left hand and all the fingers of her right hand were normal.

When Astride was born, her father was about 22 years old. When he was 17, he had injured his *right* hand in an accident. He was then working on a farm and helping to operate a fodder-chopping machine. His hand became caught in the cogs that catch the stalks and feed them toward the blades. He lost much blood, and in the end it was necessary to amputate the index and middle fingers of the injured hand. The fourth and fifth fingers were saved, but could not be fully extended (Figure 3-7). Eventually he recovered almost complete use of the hand, and he became a butcher.

André and Antoinette Stevaux married on December 27, 1954. Antoinette became pregnant with Astride about 9 months later.

The congenital malformation of Astride's left hand was attributed by at least some persons in her community to an impression on her mother from her father's deformed hand. Information about the case circulated in the community until it

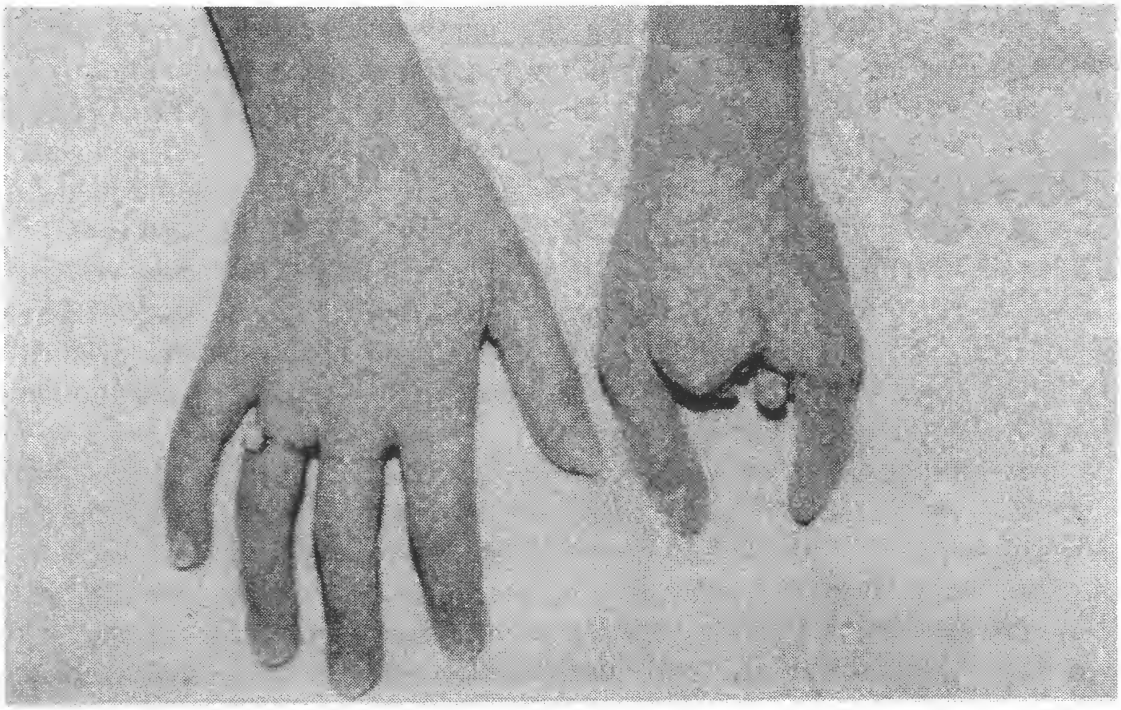

Figure 3-6 Hands of Astride Stevaux. The middle three fingers of the left hand were markedly malformed, although each had a rudimentary nail. The other fingers were all normal.

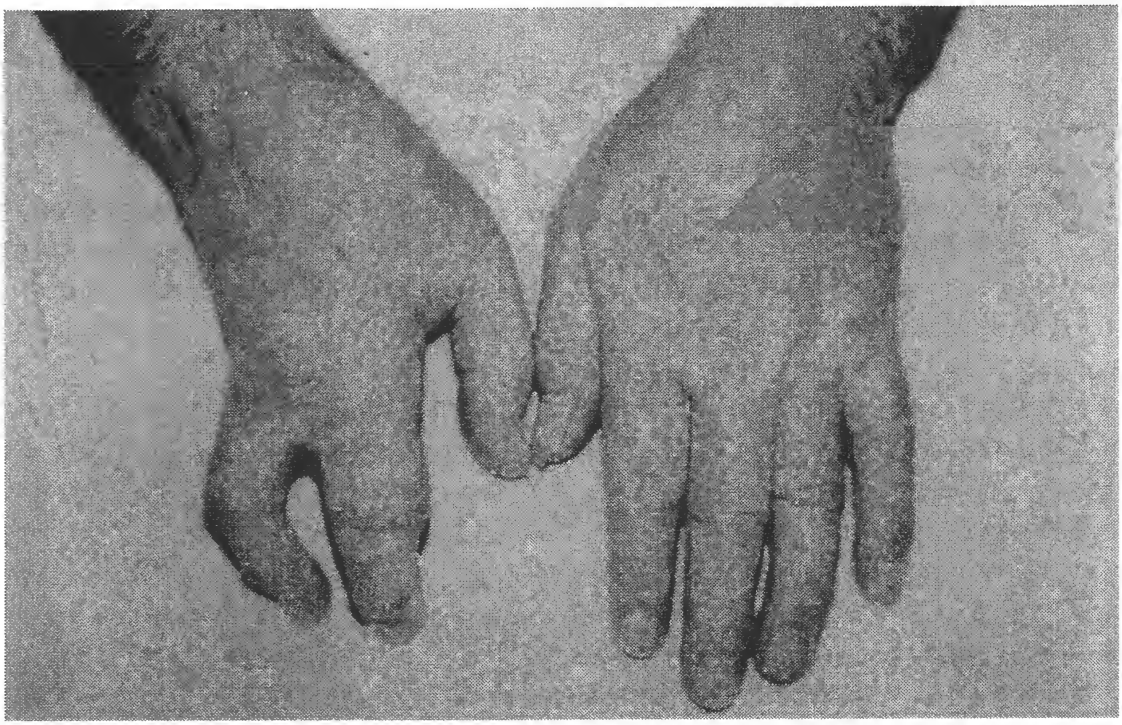

Figure 3-7 Hands of André Stevaux. The index and middle finger of the right hand were missing following their amputation. The fourth and fifth fingers of the same hand could not be fully extended.

eventually reached Dr. Bernadette Chauvin (a native of Alsace), and she informed me about it.

Having learned of the case and obtained the agreement of the Stevaux family, I went to their home in the village of Haegen, near Strasbourg, on November 28, 1987. I was able to interview André and Antoinette Stevaux as well as Astride herself.

Antoinette Stevaux's Condition during Her Pregnancy

Antoinette Stevaux said that she paid no attention whatever to the deformity of her husband's hand during her pregnancy. Neither she nor anyone else in their circle predicted that her baby would be malformed. After Astride's birth some persons of the area began to conjecture that Astride's malformation derived from the impression that her mother must have had during her pregnancy when she would have had the deformed hand of her husband in view every day.

Other Relevant Information

André and Antoinette Stevaux were not related. Their other two daughters were entirely normal. Astride married and had a daughter who was also normal.

During her pregnancy with Astride, Antoinette Stevaux enjoyed perfect health. She took no drugs or medications during her pregnancy.

Comment

This case is not like the typical one attributed to a maternal impression. First, Antoinette Stevaux underwent no single fright or shock during her pregnancy; however, in some cases (for example, Cases 15, 28, and 37 of Table 3-2) a pregnant woman has been frequently or constantly exposed to a lesion or deformity in a member of her family. Second, Antoinette Stevaux experienced no fright and expected no effect on her baby from her husband's deformity; however, we have seen that in at least 8 of the 50 cases of Table 3-2 the pregnant woman concerned had no expectation of any effect on her baby from the stimulus she experienced. Third, André Stevaux's *right* hand was injured and he lost two fingers from it, whereas Astride's malformation was on her *left* hand; however, two cases of Table 3-2 (Cases 25 and 38) showed a right/left reversal of lesions that were otherwise closely similar. Those of André and Astride Stevaux were not identical, but I consider them closely similar. Thus, although the case has features deviating from the standard case of this type, its exceptional features have occurred in other cases that seem to me to qualify as instances for which a maternal impression is a possible interpretation.[14]

[14]Cases suggestive of maternal impressions may be more common in the West than I had earlier realized. In 1988 and 1989 persons who learned of my interest in such cases informed me of two additional examples, one in England and one in Virginia. The subjects were both born in the 1920s. Unfortunately, circumstances—different in the two cases—prevented their investigation. In 1995 I learned of another case in the United States; the affected child was born in the early 1990s.

Some Variants of Maternal Impressions

Unusual Fears and Other Abnormalities Related to Maternal Impressions

Several writers on maternal impressions have referred with unfortunate vagueness to the deleterious effects on babies of a gestation during the military siege of a town or some other period of near universal fear, such as occurred in Paris during the Reign of Terror of the French Revolution. Babies born at such times are sometimes reputed to have shown a higher level of anxiety than those born in more peaceful surroundings. Reports of such observations in the 19th century were insufficiently documented.

The case of the philosopher Hobbes provides one of the few concrete examples of attributing a person's fearfulness to fear experienced by the person's mother during her pregnancy with him. Hobbes's mother was pregnant with him during the period in 1588 when Spain was preparing to wage war against England, and his mother went into labor prematurely on learning of the approach of the Spanish Armada. Hobbes explained his lifelong timorousness as caused by his mother's fear that presumably affected him as a fetus (Aubrey, 1949).

Stott (1962) advanced this subject considerably by showing that children born in Great Britain during the most stressful years of World War II (1940-41) had a significantly higher incidence of juvenile delinquency than those born before and after this period of unusual national stress. Stott considered and rejected several factors that were alternatives to the hypothesis that the stress on the mothers during their pregnancies had a durable influence on the development (and subsequent behavior) of their babies. In a related study Stott (1957) found a higher incidence of mental retardation (of all kinds) in the children born after a pregnancy in which the mother had endured an unusual psychological stress compared with the children born after a normal pregnancy. The children born after stressful pregnancies also had a higher incidence of congenital malformations.

Klebanow (1948) studied over several years the reproductive histories of a large number of Jewish women who had endured hunger and extreme psychological stress in German concentration camps during World War II. He found that among 1430 babies born to these women 4% had a major birth defect, whereas in Klebanow's clinic only 1% of babies born of women who had not undergone such stress had such birth defects. Among the 1430 babies born to these mothers 12 had Down's syndrome, an incidence of 0.8%, whereas, again in Klebanow's clinic, the expected incidence of Down's syndrome was only 1 case in 6,000-7,000 births, or 0.016%. This is a lower incidence than that reported for other series. For example, Penrose and Smith (1966), drawing on data from eight published series, estimated the incidence to be 1 case in 700 births, or 0.14%; but the important comparison is that within Klebanow's clinic, where the same diagnostic standards would apply for all examined babies. The mothers studied by Klebanow had suf-

fered from starvation as well as psychological stress. A group of mothers having babies with Down's syndrome whom Stott (1961) investigated had not undergone hunger. In his series the mothers of children with Down's syndrome had experienced psychological stress during the 2nd and 3rd months of their pregnancies much more often than had the mothers of normal children. Drillien and Wilkinson (1964) confirmed Stott's observations, although they found that in most cases the apparently relevant psychological stress had occurred to the mother before the conception of the affected baby.[15]

Reports and observations like those I have just mentioned suggest a *general* effect on the baby of a general state of anxiety in its mother; they do not demonstrate a *specific* or *local* effect that a child may have acquired from experiences its mother had during her pregnancy. I know of few accounts of such effects.

King James I of England (James VI of Scotland) had a lifelong phobia of swords and bladed weapons. He actually trembled when holding a sword himself, which made being knighted by him somewhat hazardous. When James's mother, Mary, Queen of Scots, was 6 months pregnant with him (on March 9, 1566), her husband, Lord Darnley, and a gang of allied Scottish nobles murdered her Savoyard secretary, David Riccio, whom they dragged from her presence with drawn daggers and stabbed to death. Some authors have attributed James's phobia of bladed weapons to a fetal memory of this crime (Calderwood, 1844; Roughead, 1926). The attribution of James's phobia of swords to his mother's frightening experience when pregnant with him goes back at least as far as Blondel (1729). Blondel ridiculed the interpretation of a maternal impression because, according to him, James was as much afraid of firearms as of bladed weapons and because his tutors during his childhood must have saturated his mind with bloodcurdling stories of knifings and stabbings.

Galton (1896) published a report of an unusual reaction to the sight of an injured fingernail. The subject of this case, an army officer when Galton obtained his history, had been liable from his earliest childhood to perspire, become weak, and even faint when anyone so much as mentioned an injured fingernail or when he injured one of his own fingernails. The subject was not otherwise squeamish, and he had lived through the brutalities and sufferings of military service without any notable fear, let alone a reaction as strong as he had to injured fingernails. No other member of his family had a similar trait. The subject's mother had injured her fingernail when pregnant with him shortly before his birth. She attributed his unusual sensitivity to injured fingernails to her own mishap during her pregnancy.

[15]Down's syndrome patients have trisomy of chromosome 21, and this is considered, in medical terms, to be the immediate cause of the disorder. However, about two-thirds of all trisomy conceptuses are eliminated as spontaneous abortions (Polani, 1983). It is, therefore, possible that a higher incidence of Down's syndrome (or other congenital anomalies) might result from a failure of the ordinary processes—whatever they are—whereby the majority of abnormal fetuses are spontaneously aborted. Psychological stresses could act on these processes as well as on those leading to the characteristic chromosome abnormality in Down's syndrome.

Pregnancy Cravings for Food and Maternal Impressions

A widely held belief concerning maternal impressions attributes a special sensitivity of a fetus to thwarted food cravings a pregnant woman may have. A typical birthmark generated in this way is said to have the form of the desired food, such as an apple, cherry, or raspberry. The belief existed in Europe at least as far back as the 16th century (Agrippa, 1531-33/1971). Smollett, whom I mentioned earlier, described in *Peregrine Pickle* how Peregrine's mother affected to crave pineapples and peaches, and also to have other bizarre desires the thwarting of which would lead to a birthmark on her baby.

In the case reported by C. D. Miller (1881) (Case 49 of Table 3-2) a pregnant woman strongly desired to eat some oysters, but could not obtain any. Fearing that her baby would be marked as a result of this frustration, she slapped her buttock and said that if the baby was to be marked, the birthmark should appear on its buttocks, which is where her baby did in fact have a birthmark; furthermore, it was shaped like an oyster.

Carreras (1910, p. 18) published a report of a closely similar case. A woman 7 months pregnant saw some strawberries that she very much wished to eat. Her husband, who was with her, advised her not to touch herself lest her baby be marked. The wife smiled and, pointing to her neck, said: "I am touching myself here." She then put her fingers at the back of her neck. Her baby was born with a substantial birthmark, in the shape of a strawberry, at the back of the neck.

Although most Western people do not now believe in maternal impressions, the belief persists strongly in many other parts of the world, as does the variant of it that connects the maternal impression to a food craving. Akar (1988) reported the persistence of the belief in Turkey.

The Druses of Lebanon, Syria, and Israel continue to believe in maternal impressions related to food cravings, and Druse mothers sometimes deliberately try to induce birthmarks on their babies by not eating a foodstuff they desire. In the course of studying cases of the reincarnation type among the Druses I learned about three birthmarks that informants attributed to this process. The cases came to my attention incidentally, and I did not give them as much attention as I now wish I had. In studying the first case I did not either photograph or sketch the birthmark at the time; in studying the second one I at least made a sketch of the birthmark; and when I came to the third example, I took a photograph of the birthmark. I will next present summaries of these three cases.

THE CASE OF HAMAD MISHLIB

Hamad Mishlib was born in the village of Abu Sinan (near Haifa), Israel, in 1932. His parents, both Druses, were Yusuf Mishlib and his wife, Tamimi. Hamad was the subject of a case of the reincarnation type that has its own interest, but I will not describe it here. He had a birthmark that corresponded to a ritual endeav-

or that his mother, Tamimi, made during her pregnancy with Hamad, in order to produce deliberately on her baby a birthmark in a particular place.

In 1964 I met and interviewed Hamad Mishlib and his mother at Abu Sinan. I was mainly concerned to investigate the reincarnation case of which he was the subject, but, being incidentally told about Hamad's birthmark and its origin, I made notes about it. The information obtained derived from Hamad himself and his mother.

Druse Belief in Maternal Impressions

The Druses believe that a pregnant woman can produce a birthmark on her baby if, while desiring a particular food, she resists eating it and at the same time presses some place on her body with a finger. The baby in gestation is then expected to have a birthmark on the same part of its body as that pressed by the mother on her body. The effort to produce a maternal impression on the body of an embryo should be made at "the period of sensitivity." My information on this point is not precise, but the period of sensitivity seems to be reached before the end of the 1st trimester of the pregnancy.

Tamimi's Procedure for Inducing the Birthmark

Tamimi Mishlib had heard of the Druse belief about how a pregnant mother can produce a birthmark on her baby, but she was somewhat skeptical about the matter at the time she decided to experiment with herself.

She waited until she was in what she considered the period of sensitivity (between having definite knowledge of being pregnant and the end of the 1st trimester). She felt a desire to eat some honey, but instead of eating the honey, she looked at it and at the same time pressed her left thumb on her right forearm.

Tamimi was also a witness for the occurrence of the birthmark on Hamad's right forearm. She said it was located at the place on his arm corresponding to the place on her arm that she had pressed with her thumb while she looked at the honey but did not eat it.

Hamad's Birthmark

The birthmark on Hamad's right forearm was on its palmar (volar) surface, about halfway between the wrist and elbow. The mark was a slightly depressed area having somewhat increased pigmentation compared with the surrounding skin. It was about 5 centimeters long, somewhat shaped like an elongated diamond, and about 1 centimeter wide at its widest point. In appearance it resembled the scar of a second-degree burn.

I have taken the description above from notes that I made immediately after my meeting with Hamad and his mother. In 1964 I was just becoming aware of the importance of birthmarks and had not begun to study them systematically.

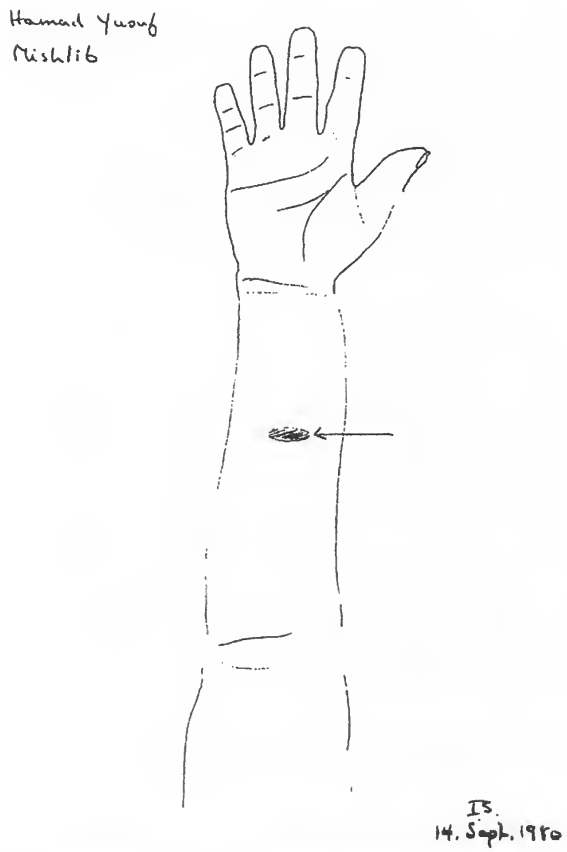

Figure 3-8 Sketch of the birthmark on the forearm of Hamad Mishlib. The sketch was made in 1980 from memory and notes written in 1964, immediately after my examination of the birthmark. The birthmark was a hyperpigmented macule, slightly depressed below the surrounding skin. It was elongated and somewhat like a diamond in shape with dimensions of approximately 5 centimeters by 1 centimeter.

This explains why I did not photograph Hamad's birthmark or even make a sketch of it at the time.

In 1980 I initiated an effort on the part of an assistant in Israel to trace Hamad and obtain for me a photograph of his hand. For the guidance of the person doing this I then drew from my memory, aided by my notes of 1964, the sketch reproduced in Figure 3-8. Unfortunately, the assistant I had hoped would obtain the photograph did not do so, and by the time another one reached the area where Hamad had lived, Hamad had died. I am therefore unable to give any more information about this case.

THE CASE OF AJAJ ANDARY

Introduction

Ajaj Andary was born in Lebanon (probably in Falougha) in about 1937. His parents were Najm Andary and his wife, Bahiyya. They were Druses. Theirs was a

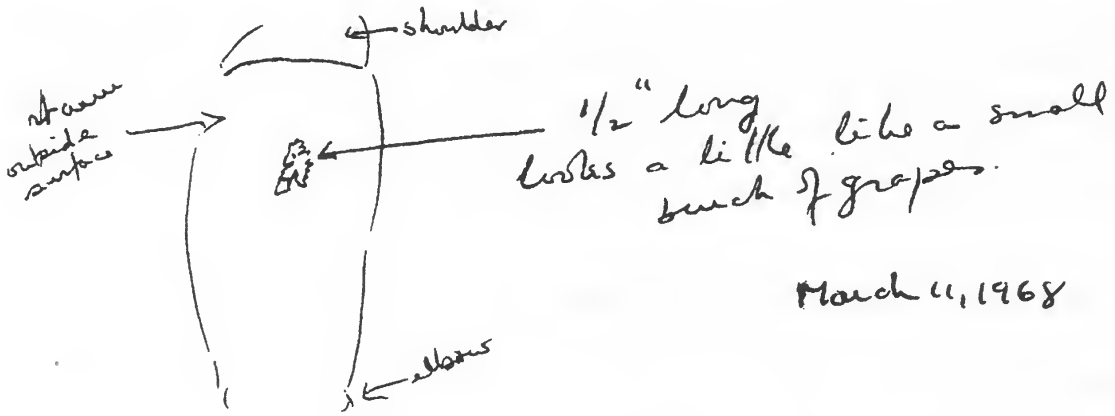

Figure 3-9 Sketch made of the birthmark on the right arm of Ajaj Andary as it appeared in March 1968, when he was about 31 years old. The birthmark was a hyperpigmented macule. It was irregular in shape and had some resemblance to a bunch of grapes.

large family, and they had altogether three sons and six daughters. Najm Andary was a farmer who also did construction work. Ajaj's younger brother Salem remembered a previous life, and I have published a detailed report of his case.

Ajaj Andary received a good education and trained as an engineer. He spent some time working in the United States and married an American woman. I sometimes met him in Falougha, if he happened to be visiting his family when I was there studying Salem's case. Unlike Salem, Ajaj could speak English, and he gave me the following account of a birthmark he had. My notes are dated March 11, 1968.

His mother was pregnant with Ajaj during the winter season when grapes were not available. (He was born in March.) As she experienced a frustrated craving for grapes, she "touched her shoulder" and expressed her desire aloud. (Ajaj explained to me that for a mark to appear on the baby's body the pregnant mother must scratch or rub her own body while expressing the craving, which in Bahiyya's case was for grapes.)

Ajaj's Birthmark

I did not photograph Ajaj's birthmark, but I made a crude sketch of it (Figure 3-9). The birthmark was a hyperpigmented macule on the lateral surface of the right upper arm near the shoulder. It was about 1 centimeter long. Its edges were somewhat like small circles so that, as my note on the sketch says, it appeared somewhat like a drawing of a small bunch of grapes.

Comment

Although I had studied the case of Hamad Mishlib 4 years earlier, when I learned of Ajaj's case my incredulity warred against my curiosity, and I did not

give Ajaj's birthmark the attention that I now wish I had. For example, I interviewed his mother Bahiyya in connection with Salem's case, but seem never to have asked her for her account of Ajaj's birthmark. His case thus lacks the testimony of the mother who marked herself that I did obtain for Hamad's case and also for the third of these Druse cases, that of Mazid Sowaid.

THE CASE OF MAZID SOWAID

Introduction

Mazid Sowaid was born in Btebyat, Lebanon, on April 30, 1967. His parents were Khattar Sowaid and his wife, Sharifa. Mazid was the youngest of their seven children. Khattar Sowaid worked at miscellaneous jobs, perhaps the most important of which was collecting the pine cones (valuable for their oil) that are found abundantly in the area of Btebyat, which is a tiny village about 20 kilometers east of Beirut. The Sowaids were Druses. (Mazid's older brother Tali was the subject of another case included in a later section of this work.)

Mazid was thought to be the reincarnation of a man called Afif Hatoum, who had died in a hospital (Hôtel Dieu de France) in Beirut on April 30, 1967, that is, on the day of Mazid's birth. Afif had been digging a well when a large stone that was being taken from the well fell out of a basket (used for lifting the stones out of the well) and hit him on the head. The identification of Mazid with Afif derived from an announcing dream that his mother had, from statements Mazid later made about the life of Afif, and from a birthmark at the top of his head. I was able to study the record of Afif's admission to the Hôtel Dieu, which confirmed the fact of his head injury and of his death (after an unsuccessful craniotomy) 36 hours after he was injured.

By the time I began investigating this case in March 1972, the birthmark at the top of Mazid's head had faded. For this reason I am not including a detailed report of his case in this volume, although its several unusual features may warrant my doing so in a future book of case reports. Here I wish to describe and discuss a second birthmark Mazid had, one on his cheek that had not faded by 1972 (Figure 3-10).

Sharifa Sowaid's Pregnancy with Mazid

Sharifa Sowaid said that when she was pregnant with Mazid she wanted to eat grapes, but grapes were not available in the mountain areas of Lebanon from October until the next summer season, which begins usually in July. In this situation of frustrated desire to eat grapes she put her finger on her right cheek.

My notes suggest (but are not explicit on the point) that Sharifa put her finger on her right cheek more than once when she wanted grapes during her pregnancy.

Figure 3-10 Birthmark on Mazid Sowaid as it appeared in March 1972, when he was nearly 5 years old. The birthmark was a hyperpigmented macule on the right cheek, ovoid in shape, and approximately 1 centimeter long and 7-8 millimeters wide.

Mazid's Birthmark

Figure 3-10 shows that Mazid had a hyperpigmented macule on his right cheek. It was ovoid in shape and approximately 1 centimeter long and 7-8 millimeters wide. Sharifa believed that it was at the site where she had pressed her own cheek with her finger when she had wanted to eat grapes during her pregnancy with Mazid.[16]

Congenital Malformations from Cursing

I included in Table 3-2 three cases (Cases 38-40) in which the pregnant woman had not seen the stimulating lesion with her own eyes, but had only heard

[16]Cases like the three I have just described may occur with greater frequency than my incidental inquiries suggest. Dr. Emily Williams Cook, during fieldwork in Lebanon in 1980, learned about and investigated a case that had the features of the three cases that I studied. This type of experimental birthmark requires a much more thorough investigation than I have made.

about it from others. She had developed her mental image of it from verbal descriptions by eyewitnesses. Ideas about the possibility of a malformed fetus may reach the mother in a variety of other ways, of which cursing is one.

A curse is an expressed wish that harm and perhaps death will come to the person cursed. In the West, cursing was common for centuries, and the censure of excommunication by the Roman Catholic Church was a type of curse. The phrase "with bell, book, and candle" expressed the fatal intent of the curse. The book was closed, the candle quenched, and the bell tolled, all symbolizing the extinction of life in the person thus condemned. There was formerly in the West a belief in the efficacy of cursing, as of its opposite, blessing. These beliefs have withered in the West so that I am surprised when I occasionally read of a Westerner who believes in cursing (Mathis, 1964; Munthe, 1899/1930, pp. 67-73; Raine, 1977, p. 73). However, like the belief in maternal impressions, that in cursing persists among many non-Western peoples, especially some of Africa (Burrell, 1963; A. A. Watson, 1973) and Australia (Mauss, 1926; Milton, 1973; Rose, 1956; Simmons, 1950; Spencer and Gillen 1899/1968). If a person believes in the efficacy of cursing and believes that he or she has been condemned to die, the person may stop eating and drinking water, which can lead to death within a few days or weeks, depending upon the degree of abstinence (D. S. Watson, 1984). However, death has occurred in some cases of cursing (or taboo violation) far too rapidly—within a few hours—for lack of food and water to account for it (Burrell, 1963; Cannon, 1942; Ellenberger, 1951; Mauss, 1926; A. A. Watson, 1973). We may conjecture that such deaths result from cardiac arrest. Certainly strong emotions can cause changes in cardiac function, including potentially fatal arrhythmias (Duncan, Stevenson, and Ripley, 1950; W. P. Harvey and Levine, 1952; T. A. Loftus, Gold, and Diethelm, 1945; Reich et al., 1981). However, the exact mechanism in cases of sudden death from cursing remains unknown. Nor do we know how many persons are cursed and do not die; we only know that some do.

In some instances cursing death occurs even though the cursed person is normally unaware that he or she has been sentenced to die by other persons at a distance from him (David-Neel, 1961; Rose, 1956).

The occurrence of quick or sudden death from cursing mediated in some paranormal manner allows us to consider the possibility that cursing may have physiological effects short of death. The usual form of cursing calls for the victim's death, not some localized disease, yet a few examples of the latter type of cursing are on record. I have learned of three published cases in which a curse predicted the birth of a baby with birth defects.

The first two cases both included a curse calling for short fingers in an unborn baby. In the first of these a clergyman, who had tenderly cultivated a fruit tree that was about to bear its first fruit, forbade any member of his family to pluck fruit from the tree before he did. The fruit nevertheless disappeared. The enraged owner suspected his wife of this crime. She was then pregnant, and he "with dreadful rashness wished, that if she was guilty, the child which she was then with might be born without fingers" (Kellie, 1808, p. 253). This happened.

Furthermore, the malformed baby was said to have become the progenitor of 10 further generations of family members with short fingers (brachydactyly). Kellie's report stated of his examination of a mother and two of her children that

> the thumbs only appeared perfect; instead of fingers, they had only the first phalanx of each finger, and the first and second of the ring-finger of the left hand. The fingers had no nails. Such [according to the mother] was also the condition of the rest of the family, and had been (with slight variations) that of nine numerous generations of her immediate ancestors. (p. 252)

Kellie observed this family in Uxbridge, England. If 10 generations had been affected by the first decade of the 19th century, and if we allow 25 years for a generation, the apparently formative cursing must have occurred in the second half of the 16th century.

The details of the second case closely resembled those of the first. The issue was again fruit stolen from a tree, and the tree's owner (and the curser) like the first one, suspected his wife. He then

> ...cursed the thief, and prayed, for so heinous an offence, that the fingers which touched the apple might all be chopped off. His wife, *enceinte*, feared much..., but dared not confess the crime....a child was born; but, sad to tell, the fingers which its father had wished to be amputated had strangely forgotten to grow. (Mackinder, 1857)

As in the preceding case the malformed baby was said to have transmitted the brachydactyly to its descendants, and by 1857 six generations of the family had been affected. They were then living in Gainsborough, England. Making a calculation similar to that for the preceding case, we could estimate that the cursing in the second one had occurred around 1700.

Comment. The similarities in these two cases—fruit stolen from a tree, the curser the husband of the thief, and the curse affecting the fingers—have made me ask myself whether the same explanation might have descended—almost as a legend—in two branches of the same family. Other details count against such a merger of the two cases, particularly the widely different dates for the cursings that supposedly caused the first malformations. Nevertheless, I think we should treat these two cases with reserve, all the more so since Kellie himself characterized the account he was given as possibly deserving a place "among the legends of the nursery." The accounts of both these cases lack the firsthand testimony that we have come to require for similar narrations.

In both the foregoing cases the cursing seems to have caused not only a malformation in the baby, but perhaps also what we would today call a genetic defect (or mutation) that resulted in the transmission of the same malformation to the first baby's descendants. I know of only one parallel case attributed to a mater-

nal impression, but it was not provoked by cursing. Instead, it was stimulated by a pregnant mother's seeing a man with double thumbs. The sight of this man's hands frightened the pregnant mother. Horne (1838) described the woman's daughter, whom he saw as an adult woman, as having

> ...six fingers on each hand. That which occupies the natural situation of the thumb resembles the index finger; or, in other words, what ought to be a thumb is a finger of three phalanges, on the radial side of which is the sixth, or supernumerary, digit, precisely similar in size and shape to the little finger, so that instead of fourteen phalanges and five metacarpal bones, there are eighteen phalanges and six metacarpal bones....Both hands are precisely similarly formed.
>
> The peculiarity in this case, however, does not rest here: she [the affected daughter of the frightened woman] has borne nine children, of which number three boys and one girl laboured under the same deformity, and one son had seven fingers on each hand, the seventh, however, being a mere fleshy appendage, arising from the base of the sixth.... (p. 115)

Comment. This case is open to the objection I raised in connection with the two preceding cases. We have no firsthand testimony about the experience of the pregnant woman who was frightened by seeing a man with double thumbs. However, if we overlook this weakness, the case is open to the interpretation that I favored for that of Calvin Ewing. Perhaps the daughter, when she came to have children, feared that they would have the same defect that she had, and influenced some of them in embryo, so that they did have defects. Unfortunately, Horne gave no information about the daughter's mental state during her pregnancies.

Returning now to cases of birth defects from cursing, I will describe one that occurred in Australia and in modern times (E. K. Turner, 1960). It is that of an infant with severe amelia and micromelia which followed a cursing of the baby's mother by her mother. The former, a 16-year-old Australian girl, had become illegitimately pregnant in the hope of forcing her parents to allow her to marry a Maltese man of whom they strongly disapproved. The girl's mother, instead of consenting to the marriage, became enraged, roundly cursed her daughter, and said that if she continued with the pregnancy, the baby would be born "without arms and legs, and blind." (This happened during the 5th or 6th week of the pregnancy.) Several persons witnessed the cursing, and the mother repeated it every 2 or 3 weeks in letters to her daughter during the remainder of the pregnancy. The pregnancy ran to term, and the daughter was delivered of a male baby. Both the infant's legs were absent, and of the right arm only the proximal half of the upper part was present. The left arm was normal down to the hand, but it had only two fingers and the thumb. Figures 3-11 and 3-12 show x-ray photographs of the baby's limbs. The infant seemed otherwise normal and was probably not blind. It was cared for in the hospital of its birth for 6 months and then transferred to a babies' home, where it died at the age of 7 months.

Figure 3-11 Radiograph of whole skeleton of infant born after its pregnant mother had been cursed. The lower limbs were absent and only the proximal part of the right arm was present. (Case of Dr. Elizabeth Turner.) (Courtesy of Dr. Elizabeth Turner and the *Medical Journal of Australia*.)

Turner (a pediatrician), who reported this case, found no evidence that any of the commonly recognized etiological factors in birth defects had occurred in it. Since Turner published her report before excessive consumption of alcohol had been definitely identified as a factor in causing birth defects, I corresponded with her about this possibility. She assured me that alcohol could not have been a causative agent in the case. (She mentioned in her letter to me that she had become aware of the teratogenic effects of alcohol before other pediatricians had published papers bringing this factor in the causation of birth defects to wide-spread attention.) So far as she could tell, the stress on the baby's mother of being cursed by her mother was the only identifiable causative factor in the case.

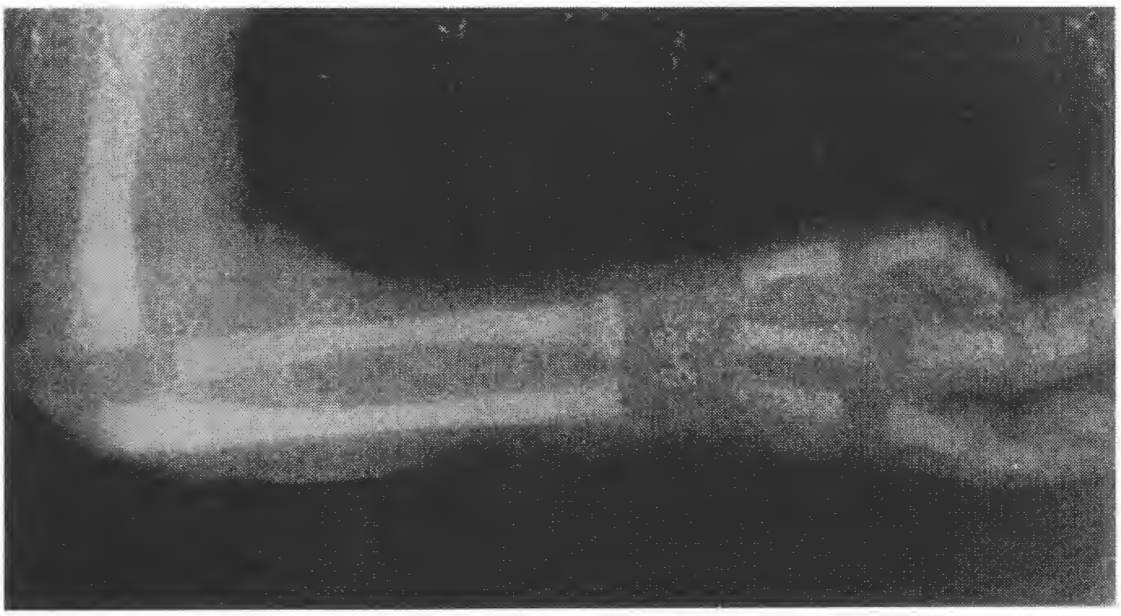

Figure 3-12 Radiograph of distal portion of left arm of infant born after its pregnant mother had been cursed. The arm was normal down to the hand, but the hand lacked two digits. (Case of Dr. Elizabeth Turner.) (Courtesy of Dr. Elizabeth Turner and the *Medical Journal of Australia*.)

I shall next report a case of severe birth defects that followed a cursing and may have resulted from it. Other interpretations, particularly reincarnation, may better explain the case, but it will be helpful to place it here as a further reminder to readers that they should consider maternal impressions as an explanation for cases suggestive of reincarnation whose subjects have birthmarks and birth defects.

THE CASE OF SAMPATH PRIYASANTHA

Summary of the Case and Its Investigation

I. Sampath Priyasantha was born at Negombo, Sri Lanka, on August 13, 1980. His parents were I. Somapala and his wife, Leelawathie. They lived in the village of Harischandrapura, which is 4 kilometers north of Negombo. The latter is a medium-sized town on the west coast of Sri Lanka, about 30 kilometers north of Colombo. Somapala was a factory worker. Sampath was the third child in the family.

When Sampath was born, his severe birth defects were noticed at once. He had no arms, and both his feet showed marked deformities (talipes equinovarus) (Figure 3-13).

The birth of such a child in Sri Lanka seems to be sufficiently unusual so that a newspaper published a photograph of Sampath. Tissa Jayawardene (an

Figure 3-13 Sampath at the age of 4 months. There was complete absence of both upper limbs. Both feet had the defect talipes equinovarus, and plaster casts had been applied with a view to correcting the deformities. (The mark on the baby's forehead was not a birth-mark, but a *tilak* mark, of religious significance.)

assistant in Sri Lanka) noticed the photograph and thought that the case would interest me. It did. In December 1980 he traveled to Harischandrapura and met Sampath and his family. He photographed Sampath, who was then 4 months old. (Figure 3-13 was not taken by Tissa Jayawardene, but is a photograph taken at about the same time that I thought more appropriate for reproducing here.)

At the time of Tissa Jayawardene's visit to Sampath's family there was no case, as understood for the purposes of this book. I thought it likely, however, that Sampath, when he became able to speak, would say something about why he was born without arms and with deformed legs. Accordingly, when I was in Sri Lanka in the autumn of 1982, I went to Harischandrapura with Godwin Samararatne (my senior assistant in Sri Lanka) and Tissa Jayawardene.

As soon as we met Somapala (on October 1, 1982), we learned that Sampath had died in about April 1982, 5 or 6 months before our visit. He was then about 20 months old, and he had just begun to say *amma* and *tatha*, the Sinhalese words for mother and father. His mother, Leelawathie, said that the cause of his death was "some urinary trouble." He had been taken to the Children's Hospital in Colombo and had died there.

Sampath's death was probably a happy release for him, but it prevented us from learning whatever he might later have said about the cause of his birth defects. However, having come as far as Harischandrapura, I decided to ask a few questions in an effort to form some conjectures about why Somapala's family would have a son born to them with such severe birth defects.

When I am asked whether I believe that, if some persons reincarnate, everyone does, I reply that we cannot say anything about that. Nevertheless, it seems to me allowable to adopt in this research the hypothesis that everyone *might* be the reincarnation of someone else. On this assumption, and from my knowledge of the features of many other cases, I asked Somapala and his younger brother Ratnapala, who was with us during this questioning, whether they had known anyone who had lost his arms in some fatal accident or otherwise not long before dying. It turned out that they had. This was a man of the village whom they had murdered (in 1974) by cutting off his arms and legs. It had already occurred to them (and to other villagers) that Sampath was the reincarnation of the man, Yasupala de Silva, whom they had murdered. But there was also another opinion in the village about the cause of Sampath's birth defects. Yasupala's mother had cursed Somapala and his family for killing her son and had openly wished that they would have a defective baby. She and other members of her family thought that Somapala had been punished for murdering her son, but that this had nothing to do with Yasupala's rebirth. We decided to interview other informants in the hope of evaluating the merits of these different explanations.

Following my single visit to Harischandrapura in 1982, I realized that we could learn more than we already had about the death of Yasupala, about Leelawathie's pregnancy, and about the occurrence of other instances of birth defects in Sampath's family. Accordingly, I asked Godwin Samararatne and Tissa Jayawardene to return to Harischandrapura for additional interviews and also to obtain, if they could, a copy of the postmortem examination of Yasupala's body. I have included the information they procured in the remainder of this report.

Persons Interviewed during the Investigation

In Harischandrapura we interviewed:

I. Somapala, Sampath Priyasantha's father
I. Ratnapala, I. Somapala's younger brother
Lankeswara Leelawathie, Sampath Priyasantha's mother
Raja Kulatunga (alias Sudu Nona) de Silva, Yasupala de Silva's mother

M. Gunasena, Yasupala's older brother
M. Irene, Yasupala's older sister
M. Dayaratne, Yasupala's youngest brother
R.K.G. Ariyawathie, Yasupala's wife
R.K.G. Perera, R.K.G. Ariyawathie's father and Yasupala's father-in-law

Yasupala de Silva's father, Sugathan, had died before 1980.

The Life and Death of Yasupala de Silva

Yasupala de Silva was the third child and second son of his parents. He had an older brother, M. Gunasena, and an older sister, M. Irene. After Yasupala's birth two more sons were born in the family.

At the time of his death Yasupala was a young man of about 22. He had been married for about 2 years, and his wife was pregnant at the time of his death. (After his death she gave birth to a normal son.)

Yasupala's family had a tradition of violence. One of Yasupala's brothers died violently (under circumstances that I did not learn). Another of his brothers, M. Gunasena, told us, just in passing, that he had himself killed three men. During the insurgency in Sri Lanka of April 1971, Gunasena and Yasupala had been arrested and detained as suspects, and at that time Yasupala had assaulted two prison guards. A family of this type would naturally have enemies in a village like Harischandrapura. Yasupala's father decided to put an end to their principal adversaries and prepared a bomb to throw at them. However, he became nervous while handling the bomb and dropped it. The bomb exploded and killed him.

Opinions about Yasupala's character differed widely. His mother, Sudu Nona, had not overcome her grief over Yasupala's death, and she was his panegyrist. However, his father-in-law, R.K.G. Perera, acknowledged that he "had many enemies." His older brother, M. Gunasena, stated frankly that Yasupala had been what the Sinhalese call a *chandiya*. This word does not lend itself to precise translation, but means, approximately, a rough, tough person who is given to bullying other people. M. Gunasena further said that Yasupala was "ruthless," and he compared him in this respect to the German military commander Field Marshal Erwin Rommel. He thought that Yasupala had no compassion, even for his mother and wife. In his opinion, Yasupala would have been killed on some other pretext, if the one that arose had not occurred in the following manner.

A dog owned by Yasupala got into Somapala's house and ate a curry that Somapala's wife had prepared for her family. A quarrel ensued between women of the two families, and when the husbands came home it spread to them. There had also been an earlier disagreement between them over the ownership of a tree. While pretending to make a truce, Somapala and his brother decided to rid the village of Yasupala. They somehow arranged for him to be filled with liquor and enticed over to a place on the road near where they lived. They then attacked him and cut off his arms

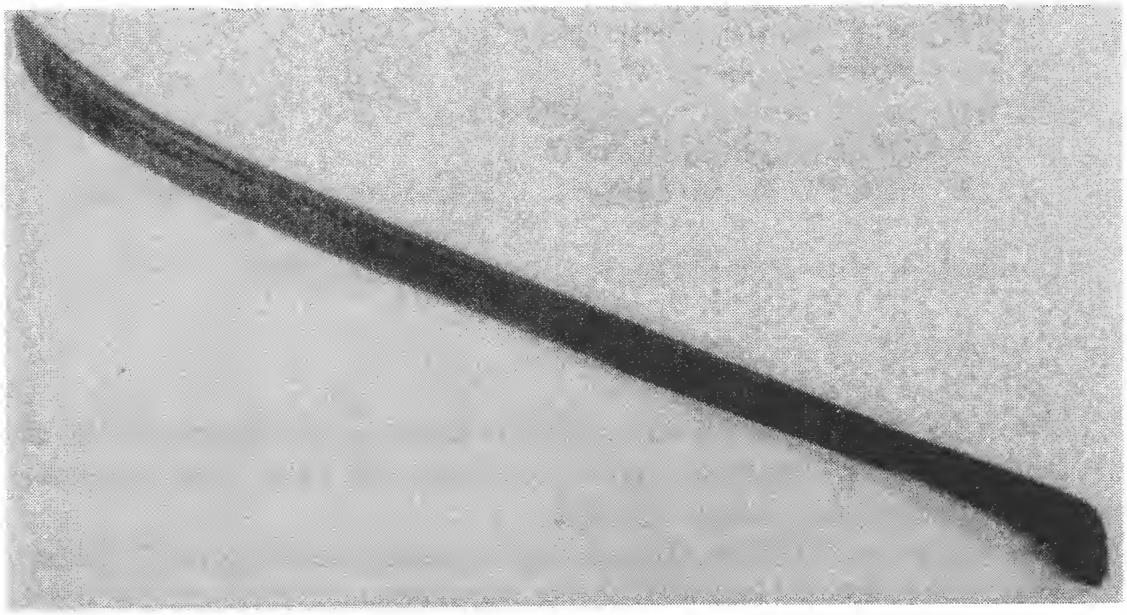

Figure 3-14 Sword purchased in Galle, Sri Lanka, in 1972. A sword similar to this one may have been used in the murder of Yasupala.

and legs with a sword. (Figure 3-14 shows a sword that I purchased in Sri Lanka, and I presume the murder weapon in this case somewhat resembled the one in the figure.)

Somapala and Ratnapala were themselves intoxicated when they murdered Yasupala, and we cannot expect their accounts of the details of the murder to have all the clarity that we would wish. However, in general, their narrations of how they killed Yasupala accorded with what we learned from four members of Yasupala's family who had seen his body after he was killed and also with the postmortem report that we obtained.

Somapala and Ratnapala cut through most of Yasupala's arms and legs so that the parts distal to their cuts were left dangling, but not completely severed. (I asked whether they had cut his arms or his legs first and learned that they had first cut the arms and then the legs.) Somapala said that Yasupala was still living when he and his brother walked away from him. Stretching my credulity, he said that Yasupala's life might have been saved, if he had been taken immediately to a hospital. However, instead of doing this, other villagers came to the dying Yasupala, and, like the Roman senators during Caesar's murder, they stabbed him in many places; as Somapala put it, Yasupala was "generally an unpopular person." Informants were not reluctant to state the precise number of wounds inflicted on Yasupala, and the *lowest* of their varying figures was 32. He died about 15 minutes after Somapala and Ratnapala had left him. This murder occurred on February 24, 1974.

Although many villagers saw Yasupala when he was dying or saw his body after he had died, Leelawathie was not one of these. Yasupala's body was not cremated, but buried.

The police came and arrested Somapala, Ratnapala, and half a dozen other suspects. After the usual delays, they were convicted in 1976 and sentenced to 3 years in prison. They were released early for good behavior in 1977. Their impris-

onment (in Negombo) was not rigorous, and Somapala had frequent leaves (during the day) from the prison. He would come to his village at these times. He and his wife had another child, a daughter, who was conceived while Somapala was still in prison and born in March 1978.

The Report of the Postmortem on Yasupala. This report with one exception confirmed the statements made by Somapala and the three members of Yasupala's family concerning the major wounds inflicted on Yasupala when he was murdered. The report described a total of 40 wounds on the body. The pathologist described these as "caused by a sharp weapon." He described wounds of both legs and the right arm as having cut bones and exposed muscle in such a way that the expression "left dangling" would have applied. Indeed, for the wound of the left leg the pathologist described it as "almost severing the middle of the left leg." The pathologist's report, however, mentioned no wounds of the *left* arm with the exception of an abrasion on the left wrist that he judged "non-grievous." Somapala and the three members of Yasupala's family all agreed that the distal parts of *all* Yasupala's limbs were left dangling. The pathologist described three deep and "grievous" wounds of the right forearm, but none of the left forearm.

Comment. Confusion between right and left is frequent, even among pathologists. I am inclined to think that the pathologist who examined Yasupala's body, in writing out his report, may have made a slip and incorrectly stated that a wound that was on the left arm was on the right arm.

Events between Yasupala's Death and Sampath's Birth

I cannot say whether grief or rage predominated in Sudu Nona after the death of her son Yasupala. I have already mentioned that she had not overcome her grief in 1982, although what she showed us then combined sorrow for the loss of her husband and another son with that for Yasupala's death. Her anger, however, was more pertinent to the present case.

Leelawathie said that Sudu Nona had said to her in public, more than once: "For killing my son, you will have a defective child." M. Irene, Sudu Nona's daughter and Yasupala's older sister, confirmed that her mother had the habit, "whenever she passes Somapala's house, of cursing them. She appeals to the gods to punish them in some way. She did that before the deformed child (Sampath) was born and also after." M. Irene did not recall that her mother predicted in so many words that Leelawathie would have a malformed child. Sudu Nona herself denied that she had done this. She said that she had simply called on the gods—Kataragama and Vishnu[17]—to punish Somapala's family for having killed Yasupala. The gods had done this, she thought, by giving them a defective child.

[17]I have explained in Chapter 1 that most Sinhalese Buddhists practice a syncretic religion. They find nothing incompatible between Theravada Buddhism and appeals to Hindu gods, such as Kataragama and Vishnu, especially for help during life's crises. Further details can be found in my volume reporting cases in Sri Lanka (Stevenson, 1977) and in Gombrich (1988).

Sudu Nona's curse, or invocations of the gods (which amounted to the same thing), disquieted Leelawathie. Somapala's crime itself may also have given Leelawathie concern about some retribution for it. She recalled mentioning to Somapala that Yasupala might be reborn as their child. When she was pregnant with her younger daughter, Sagurika Ranjani, she feared that her baby might be malformed. When, however, Sagurika Ranjani was born and seen to be normal, Leelawathie relaxed, thinking that she and Somapala had somehow neutralized the curse. They were dismayed, therefore, but not completely surprised, when Sampath was born with his severe birth defects.

According to Leelawathie, Sudu Nona was the first villager to speculate that the malformed baby was Yasupala reborn. This soon became widely believed in the village. In talking with us, Sudu Nona said that at first she had indeed thought that Sampath might be her son reborn, but on examining the baby closely she could see no resemblance between Sampath and Yasupala. Her later conclusion was therefore that Sampath's birth defects resulted somehow from Somapala's crime and that Sampath was not Yasupala reborn. Her daughter, M. Irene, and oldest son, M. Gunasena, shared this view. Irene said that she could not believe that her brother could be reborn in "that condition," meaning with the birth defects that Sampath had. "The harm," she added, "was done by the child's father." M. Gunasena (Yasupala's older brother) thought the suggestion that Sampath was Yasupala reborn was "incompatible with the Buddhist idea of justice." According to his view of Buddhism, Somapala should suffer for what he had done to Yasupala, but Yasupala should not suffer for what Somapala had done to him.

For their part, Somapala and Leelawathie inclined to the belief that Yasupala had been reborn to them as Sampath. They both thought that Sampath and Yasupala resembled each other in the positioning of their teeth. They said that Sampath's teeth—of both jaws—tended to slope inwards. Neither of their other children had such teeth, but Yasupala's teeth had sloped inward in a similar way. However, I could not confirm from other informants that Yasupala's teeth had anything distinctive in their appearance. His wife and mother both denied that they had.

Other Relevant Observations

Although Sampath died as he was just beginning to speak, I thought he might have shown in other behavior some attitude toward his parents or other people that we should enquire about. So I asked Somapala how the baby had seemed to react in his presence. Somapala had noticed that Sampath showed rudimentary signs of affection toward him. For example, when Somapala came home and called out "Baby" to Sampath, the latter would come near him and touch Somapala's sarong. Somapala interpreted this as a gesture of respect. Because of his deformed feet, Sampath could not move around easily. It is clear, however, that he did not have a phobia of Somapala. He also showed affection toward his uncle, Ratnapala.

Announcing dreams figure little in Sinhalese cases, and none occurred in this case. Two dreams by members of the families concerned contributed nothing to the interpretation of the case, but I will mention them briefly.

Sudu Nona had a dream about Yasupala the day after his death. In the dream he came into the kitchen, sat down where Yasupala used often to sit when alive, and asked for some rice. Sudu Nona gave him some rice, which he ate. While he was eating it, Sudu Nona asked him what had happened to him. Yasupala sighed deeply and disappeared. This dream provided no indication of Yasupala's further destiny.

Leelawathie dreamed, during her pregnancy with Sampath, of snakes and elephants, but this had no meaning with regard to the identity of the child to be born.

Sampath's Birth Defects

Sampath had bilateral absence of the arms (amelia). Figure 3-13 shows that he had a nubbin at the left shoulder. It does not show—and neither do other photographs—whether he had a similar nubbin on the right side.

Both of Sampath's feet were turned medially, and the plaster casts seen in the figure were applied in an effort to correct this deformity. Somapala said that the toes of Sampath's left foot showed "abnormalities," but I did not learn what these were, and I cannot discern any in the photograph.

Sampath had no birthmarks corresponding to the multiple stab wounds inflicted on the dying Yasupala by the angry villagers who swarmed around him.

Excluding Known Causes of Birth Defects. None of the ordinarily recognized causes of birth defects are identified in this case. The parents were not related, at any rate closely; since they came from the same village, they might have had some remote common ancestor.

I enquired about other birth defects in the family and was told there were none. (The several members of the family whom I saw—Sampath's parents, paternal uncle, and one sister—had no limb defects.) After my interviews I felt dissatisfied with the completeness of the family history I had obtained, and at my request Tissa Jayawardene returned to the village and enquired about every member of the two families of Sampath's parents with regard to their having had birth defects. His informants were Sampath's mother, one of his paternal aunts, and the latter's husband. He drew genealogies to assure completeness of the information. This survey included Sampath's 3 siblings, all 20 of his cousins, all 8 of his uncles and aunts, and 3 of his grandparents. Information could not be furnished about one grandparent, presumably because she had died when the informants were quite young. None of these persons suffered from any birth defect known to the informants. The only abnormality they recalled for any of these persons was "mental weakness" in one of Sampath's cousins.

Sampath's mother told me that she had enjoyed good health during her pregnancy with Sampath and that she had taken no drugs or alcohol. After my interview with Sampath's mother, Godwin Samararatne had a further interview

with her concerning the medical care she had received during her pregnancy with Sampath. He learned the following details.

When Leelawathie's pregnancy was at 5 months, she attended a clinic in a nearby town and was told her pregnancy was normal. She returned to the clinic at 6 months, was examined by the medical officer, and was again told the pregnancy was normal. She was given some tablets, probably vitamins. At the 8th month she again attended the clinic and was told the pregnancy was normal. She was examined this time by the head nurse, but not by the doctor, apparently because the pregnancy was still judged normal. Records of these visits were not obtainable, but we did obtain a copy of the record of Sampath's delivery at a nearby hospital. The delivery was described as having taken place normally at full term. The hospital report noted the absence of the upper limbs of the baby and talipes equinovarus of the feet. The baby was also noted to have a hydrocele.

Comment

Here I shall briefly draw attention to several features of the case that I shall discuss more fully later, when I can consider them in relation to all the cases under review.

It is extremely rare for informants to believe that a child is the reincarnation of someone whom its father or another relative had murdered. I can think of few examples—the case of Ma Khin San is one—in which such a development was even conjectured. However, cases of this type may occur more often than I realize, and be suppressed, for obvious reasons. I have learned about two such cases in Lebanon, but I obtained only secondhand information concerning them; when I tried to interview the people directly involved, I found them unwilling to cooperate.

My question (to Somapala) about whether Somapala and Ratnapala had cut Yasupala's arms first or his legs derived from my belief, which was becoming stronger in 1982, that the state of a person's consciousness when he or she is fatally wounded importantly influences the occurrence of birthmarks and birth defects on a later-born person who will remember the wounding. The birth defects of Sampath's legs were minor compared with those of his arms, which were completely absent. I find this harmonious with what we can imagine of Yasupala's mental state as his murderers killed him. The cutting off of his two arms must have quickly produced copious hemorrhages. (His wife, who went to see his body afterward, said that "blood was all over"; she fainted at the sight.) From the severe hemorrhages Yasupala would have rapidly lost consciousness and been unconscious as his murderers proceeded to cut off his legs and then left him for the other villagers to finish off.

It seems likely that for a curse to be effective the cursed person should believe in the effectiveness of cursing. At any rate, such belief surely increases a person's vulnerability to a curse. In this respect Leelawathie was exposed, because

Sudu Nona's cursing unnerved her to the extent that she half expected to have a malformed child and felt relief when she gave birth first to a normal daughter.

The members of Yasupala's family who believed that Sampath's birth defects punished his (Sampath's) family for the murder must also have believed that the cursing (whatever specific words were used) had been successful. Sorcery is widely practiced in Sri Lanka and its efficacy generally believed in. In sorcery the complainant hires a priest to invoke the supernatural powers of gods in order to punish—with injury, illness, or death—a person who has seriously offended him or her. The act of sorcery is a kind of vicarious cursing. It appears to be much commoner than face-to-face cursing, because Obeyesekere (1975, p. 16) found that only 10% of surveyed clients at three Sri Lanka sorcery shrines had engaged in personal confrontation with their adversaries. Only 4% (included in the mentioned 10%) had engaged in physical or verbal abuse, which might, we could suppose, have included a direct cursing.

Although most Sinhalese people believe in maternal impressions, none of my informants mentioned a maternal impression as a possible cause of the birth defects. As I mentioned, Sampath's mother had not viewed Yasupala's dead body, although she must have heard the descriptions of his wounds; nor was she pregnant at the time of the murder. These features are usually present in standard cases of maternal impression, and their absence in this case may have led the informants to set this interpretation aside.

We have no evidence that should tilt us toward either of the other two explanations offered by informants for Sampath's birth defects: that he was either Yasupala reborn or a punishment inflicted on his parents for Yasupala's murder. Incidentally, the latter explanation does not appeal to *my* sense of justice, because it makes an apparently harmless baby a mere instrument for the expression of vengeance on a murderer; but science is concerned with what is, not with what we think should be. Perhaps neither explanation is correct. Perhaps Sampath was just born without arms by chance. This is what most Western scientists would probably say, but the villagers of Harischandrapura do not believe in accidents of this kind. We did not meet any informant who saw no meaning whatever in the tragedy of Sampath's birth defects.

My readers who are attracted to the idea of chance may wish to have information about the probability of an infant being born with both arms absent. Birch-Jensen (1949) stated that in his Danish series the incidence of amelia of one upper arm at birth was 1 in about 270,000. He gave no figure for bilateral amelia. However, Frantz and O'Rahilly (1961) found that among 13 cases of amelia of the upper arm, 7 (54%) were bilateral. Combining these data, we can estimate that the incidence of bilateral amelia of the upper arm is about 1 in 500,000 births. The condition is so unusual that it is not even mentioned in the usual inventories of the incidences of common congenital malformations. (Amelia did occur more commonly during the brief epidemic [in the early 1960s] of thalidomide intoxication, but neither that drug nor any other was in question in the present case.)

Spontaneous Imagings of Mothers Related to Birthmarks and Birth Defects

In describing standard cases of maternal impressions, I cited one in which a mother had dreamed of a man with a defective ear and had subsequently given birth to a child with a similarly defective ear (Hammond, 1868). In this case there was no reported external stimulus—of sight or verbal description—that had stimulated the mother's dream and the related maternal impression that apparently affected her baby. I mentioned a resemblance between this case and some cases of the reincarnation type with announcing dreams of which I shall give examples later. We could also interpret this case as one of precognition on the part of the mother concerning the baby she was to have.

Tanagras (1967) reported a somewhat similar case. The subject was a Greek woman who had given birth to nine children. She seemed to know precisely when she became pregnant, and on each occasion of conceiving she heard "an inner voice" that made a prediction concerning the baby that would be born about 9 months later. The predictions the mother heard included the occurrence of birthmarks, birth defects, and illnesses that the children would have. For example, her first child was to be lame, the second to "have a mole on her left side," and the third "a cyst on the left eyebrow." These predictions all proved correct.[18]

The subject had other paranormal experiences besides her remarkable predictions about her children. She seemed sometimes to be the focus of psychokinetic phenomena. Tanagras subsumed all the features of her case under what he called *psychobolie*, the term he devised for paranormal physical effects on living people, especially those of a destructive nature. I shall not here discuss the difficulty that occurs when we try to distinguish evidence for precognition from that for psychokinesis. I shall only mention that Tanagras believed that many events usually attributed to precognition in fact result from what he called the psychobolic power of the subject. In his view, the subject of the experiences described above did not just foresee events that would happen; she made them happen. Many students of these phenomena—myself included—find this hypothesis deserving of further inquiry, but do not regard it as in any way confirmed.

I will next describe a case in which a pregnant woman—without being externally stimulated—wished to have a boy, even if crippled, and then gave birth to a badly malformed baby boy.

[18]The predictions were not recorded in advance, and no physician investigated them until after the birth of the subject's ninth child. However, a physician was able to observe the fulfillment of several of the woman's predictions about illnesses her children would develop after infancy. Still later, Tanagras, who was himself a physician, made further inquiries before he published his report of the case.

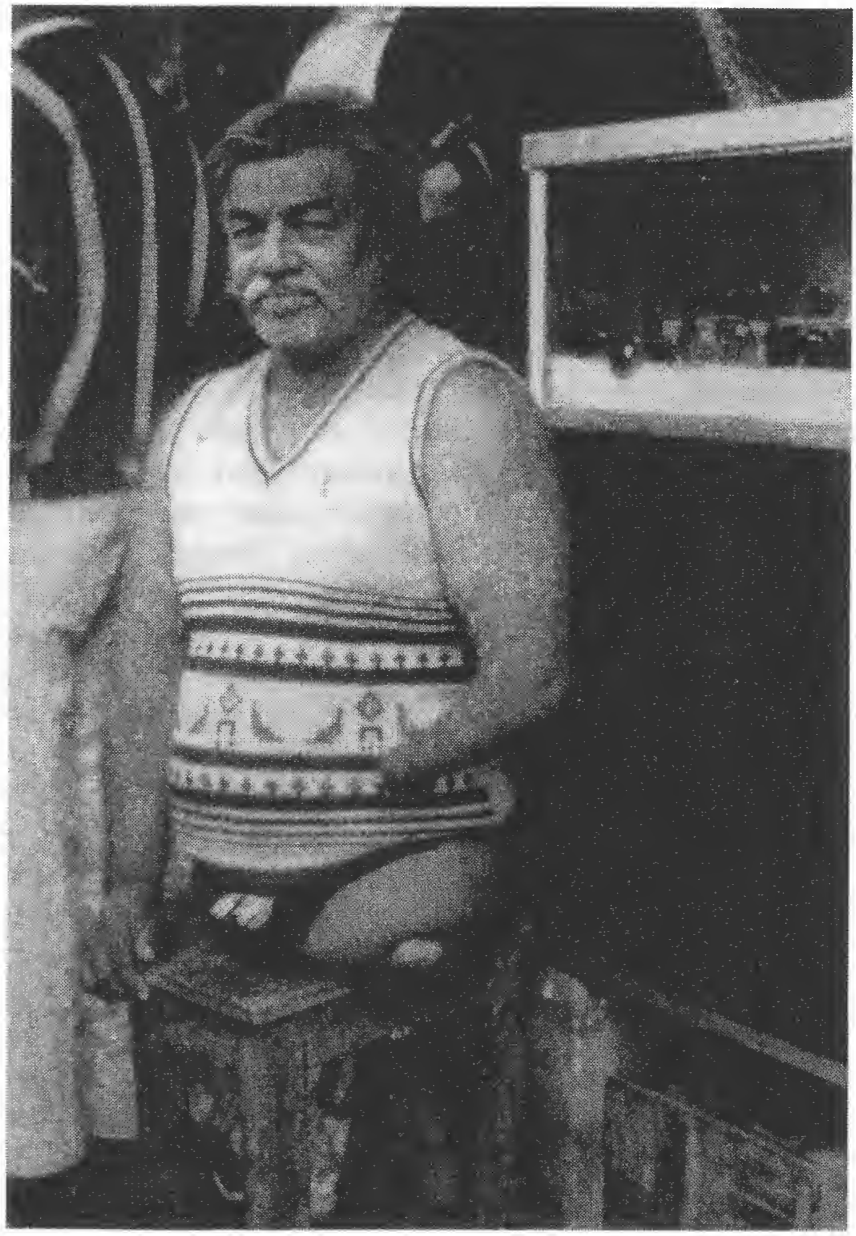

Figure 3-15 Laadley Ali at his place of work in December 1993. He had complete absence of both legs and absence of the distal half of the left forearm.

THE CASE OF LAADLEY ALI

Laadley Ali, a Moslem, was born in Bareilly, Uttar Pradesh, India, in 1944. He was the sixth successive son of his parents, who, after Laadley's birth, had one more son and, finally, a daughter. Laadley was born without any legs (bilateral amelia) and with absence of the distal half of the left forearm (unilateral hemimelia) (Figure 3-15).

When Laadley grew up, he married and had two sons. He trained as a locksmith and engaged successfully in this work. When I met him, I watched him work-

ing skillfully at his trade. He could steady an object on which he was working with the stump of his left arm while doing the fine work with his normal right hand. He was also surprisingly mobile and showed us how he could easily lift himself from the ground onto the stool (shown in Figure 3-15) where he sat for his work.

I learned of this case from Arya Bhushan, who described it briefly to me in a letter dated August 3, 1993. I expressed interest in meeting Laadley Ali when I was next in India, and Arya Bhushan said this would be feasible. He also obtained some additional information about the case from an interview that his niece, Dr. Poonam Mittal, had with Laadley. Arya Bhushan included this information in a further letter to me dated November 9, 1993.

On December 15, 1993, I met Laadley at his place of work on a street in Bareilly. Dr. Satwant Pasricha and Dr. Poonam Mittal were with me. Both of Laadley's parents had died, but his older brother Asgar was available as an informant. Asgar was 5 or 6 years older than Laadley. Thus our information derives exclusively from what Laadley and Asgar told us.

According to Laadley, after his mother had given birth to five boys (and no girls) she again became pregnant. Some of her friends then told her that she should have a girl this time. To this she replied: "Oh, no! I don't want a girl. My baby should be a boy even if crippled."

Laadley learned about his mother's wish to have another boy, even if a crippled one, not from his mother but from neighbors. His mother never spoke about the matter to him. According to Laadley, such wishes occurred sometimes in his community after a mother had had three or more sons; girls were considered much less desirable than boys. Yet he knew of no other case like his own.

Asgar corroborated Laadley's statement about what their mother had said when she was pregnant with Laadley. He added the detail that "he [Laadley] was very active in the womb and she had a lot of difficulty so she said after all that trouble I should have only a son." (Because quickening usually first occurs between the 4th and 5th month of a pregnancy, the pregnancy was fairly advanced when Laadley's mother made her wish.) Asgar described her as "praying" for a boy. Asgar himself was only 5 or 6 years old at the time, but he remembered that after Laadley's birth "a lot of people" came to see him, and his mother would tell them about her wish to have a son.

So far as Laadley knew, his mother had been in good health during her pregnancy with him. There were no other cases of birth defects in the family even in its extension. Asgar confirmed that their mother's pregnancy with Laadley was normal. She took no medicines, did not smoke, and drank no alcohol. (About the last three details Asgar was speaking generally, not from a precise memory of his mother's pregnancy with Laadley. He said that in "those days no one used to take medicines," and that his mother "never" used tobacco or alcohol.)

Laadley had no memories of a previous life when he was a young child.

Comment. In trying to understand this case we should think of the following possibilities. First, Laadley might have been born with his defects by chance. Second, his mother might have had, during her pregnancy, some teratogenic illness,

such as rubella, that was little noticed at the time and afterward forgotten. Third, she might have had a paranormal cognition that she was going to have a defective baby; her expressed wish would thus have been an acquiescence in a process already under way. And fourth, her wish to have a boy at any cost—even one gravely defective—may have produced the defects in her baby. If we accept this last possibility, we are left with the question of why Laadley should have to live the life of a cripple just to satisfy his mother's wish to have a boy at any price. The case, like that of Sampath Priyasantha, challenges students of theodicy.

Further Comments Concerning Maternal Impressions

My study of published case reports together with the several cases that have come under my own observation have convinced me that we should not attribute to chance all correspondences between a stimulus frightening (or otherwise affecting) a pregnant woman and a birthmark or birth defect in her baby. A pregnant mother's mental images do appear sometimes to exert a local influence on the body of her baby. We do not understand how this can happen, and it may say little to call it paranormal, since we know so little about paranormal processes of any kind. Nevertheless, this designation may be an advance over denying the possibility of causally related correspondences in some cases only because we have no evidence of a material connection between mother and fetus that could account for an influence of the former's mind on the latter's body.

I mentioned earlier that physicians of the present century have published few cases of maternal impressions. The topic gradually became so unfashionable that Stott (1961) confessed to having misgivings about starting investigations into the effects of psychological stresses during pregnancy for fear of being thought to countenance superstition.

We must consider two possibilities to account for the falling off in the frequency of reports of maternal impressions: either they are still occurring but not being reported, or they are not occurring with the same frequency as before. Both of these explanations may be correct.

If they are occurring but not being reported or investigated, they might be in the company of other paranormal experiences—little noticed or totally neglected except by a handful of dissident scientists who have preserved an interest in such phenomena. However, it seems to me more likely that birthmarks and birth defects from maternal impressions are no longer occurring (at least in the West) with the frequency they seem to have had—we do not know precisely what that frequency was—in the 18th and 19th centuries. Two factors may account for this decline.

First, women are now less likely to be frightened by seeing on the streets seriously deformed or marked persons. Many persons with birthmarks and birth defects now receive more effective treatments, such as from surgery and prostheses, than those available in the 18th and 19th centuries. Also, education has helped most people to abandon the idea of the frightfulness of "monsters." Few persons today even know that the word *monster* is cognate with Latin *monstrare* and

English *demonstrate*. The word's etymology reflects the belief formerly held that birth defects were showings of the gods, made as a warning to humans (Cicero, 1938). Today birth defects are considered "natural," even if still both saddening and mysterious; and they no longer excite the fright they formerly did. In fact, exposure to serious birth defects figured (as the stimulus to a pregnant woman) in only a few of the 50 cases listed in Table 3-2. More commonly the woman concerned had seen some mutilating accident or surgical operation, or she had seen the wounded person soon afterward. Here also, circumstances have changed, and I think women (outside of warfare) are much less exposed directly to sights of physical trauma today than they were a century ago.

I believe, however, that a decline in the belief in maternal impressions has inhibited their actual occurrence. In this matter, as in many others, patients followed the lead of their doctors. In another of his papers, Stott (1957) stated:

> "Old wives' tales" have been fairly effectively killed by family doctors.... Contemporary folklore strongly favors hereditary explanations, and the foremost thought in the minds of parents [having a defective child] was to scan their ancestries and other branches of their families for further instances of defect or abnormality. (p. 1008)

For Stott's research this attitude had an advantage, because it meant that the mothers of the defective children he studied were uninformed—naive one might say—about the possibility of maternal impressions; consequently, their reports of psychological stresses during pregnancy did not arise from expectations on their part of the relevance of such stresses.

However, a second and more important—but beneficial—result of medical (and subsequent maternal) skepticism about maternal impressions follows from the way in which belief creates reality, at least in the domain of psychosomatic relationships. Women who do not believe that sudden shocks and fears during pregnancy could produce birthmarks and birth defects may have a barrier against the production of these by this process.[19] Put briefly, if we have lost in our age the benefits of blessings from saints, we have also lost the evils of congenital malformations from fears and cursings. I can believe in this inhibiting effect of present Western attitudes without denying that maternal impressions adversely affected fetuses of a former period in the West and that they may still affect them in some

[19]This may seem inconsistent with what I said earlier: A pregnant woman's belief about whether her baby would be affected by some disturbing stimulus to her is a poor predictor of whether it will or will not be apparently affected. I think it is helpful to distinguish a *general* belief in a culture about the reality of maternal impressions and a *specific* belief by a particular woman that she (and her baby) have been affected by a stimulus. Where the belief is general, the mother may be vulnerable to an effect, even though she is not conscious of being under such an influence and may deny that she is. Just as persons who have been hypnotized—beyond any doubt—may afterwards deny that they were, so we are all much more under the influence of the collective beliefs of our culture than we normally recognize.

parts of the world today. If skepticism today in the West blocks the effect of maternal impressions, at other times and places belief would have facilitated it. I do not think that because an event does not happen now (and in my presence) a similar event could not have happened elsewhere or in the past. I will need to return to this topic at a much later stage of this work, when it will be appropriate to consider why the main cases in it are reported in certain parts of the world more frequently than in others.

This concludes all that I wish to say about maternal impressions in this place. Later sections of this book will repeatedly pose for readers the principal question raised by the stronger cases of maternal impressions, which is: To what extent can we attribute to chance close correspondences between an impression on the mother and a defect in her baby? In many, although not in all, of the main cases of this book the mother has seen the body of the deceased person whose wounds or other marks her baby seems to have reproduced. In some other cases, although she has not seen the dead person's wounds, she may have heard them described. For birthmarks and birth defects of these groups a maternal impression is sometimes the leading rival to reincarnation as an explanation.[20] It is to help readers hold clearly in their minds the alternative interpretation of maternal impressions that I have felt justified in pressing on them more information about this subject than some may think necessary. I now come to the cases of the reincarnation type whose subjects have birthmarks and birth defects.

[20]In studying the reports of several cases of a birth defect attributed to a maternal impression I have asked myself whether, in another age or culture, informants would interpret the case as one of reincarnation. For example, Barker (1887) reported (at secondhand) the case of a boy born with both "lower extremities amputated above the knees" (p. 175). The first wife of the boy's father had been run over by a train, both of her lower limbs being amputated. This case (for which, unfortunately, we have no other details) might also be interpreted as one of reincarnation. (It may be compared with that of Ma Khin Mar Htoo [of Burma], which I report in a later section of this work.) Taylor (1876) reported the case of a pregnant woman who nursed her sister during the sister's terminal illness with valvular heart disease. After the sister's death, she gave birth to a baby with cardiovascular disease (not specified, but the baby was dyspneic and cyanotic), who died at 6 months. This case also could be interpreted as an instance of reincarnation by the deceased woman as her sister's baby.

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Part II

BIRTHMARKS

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4

Birthmarks Related to Previous Lives without Verification of Possible Corresponding Wounds

INTRODUCTION

In this and the following two chapters I shall report a selection of cases the subjects of which had birthmarks apparently related to violent deaths in previous lives. In presenting the cases, I shall move from the weakest (in this chapter) to the strongest with regard to evidence of a correspondence between the subject's birthmarks and wounds on the body of the person whose life he claimed to remember. For the cases of the present chapter I could not obtain any verification concerning the location on the relevant deceased person of a wound or wounds corresponding to the subject's birthmark. Indeed, in five cases of this chapter the subject's statements were *all* unverified, because no person corresponding to them was ever traced. In the remaining four cases such a person was found, and the subject's main statements were verified; however, the informants either never knew or could not remember the location of the wounds on the person whose life the subject remembered.

To a reader who may ask why I present weaker cases first instead of immediately deploying the stronger ones, I offer the following reasons. First, by presenting brief accounts of cases having less detail I can quickly demonstrate the great variety of the birthmarks with which this work is concerned. I consider it

important for a reader to appreciate early in the study of this subject that most of the birthmarks I shall describe are *not* hyperpigmented macules or nevi. The birthmark of 1 of the 9 subjects (U Tinn Sein) included in this chapter is a flat hyperpigmented macule; but the other birthmarks are different.[1] Most of them, in addition to having abnormalities of pigmentation, were elevated or depressed in relation to the surrounding skin, and several were puckered or markedly elongated. Many of these birthmarks looked like scars of acquired wounds or other lesions, although the photographs may not always demonstrate this clearly.

Second, the cases with no verification of the possibly corresponding wounds have other features besides the birthmarks in which they resemble the cases with such verification. For example, the subject spoke about the mode of death in most of the cases, and he often showed phobias or lesser aversions related to that mode of death; also, he started speaking about the previous life at the same young age—usually between 2 and 5—as did subjects of other cases, and he stopped speaking spontaneously at the usual age—5 to 8 years—when the subjects of verified cases stop speaking about the lives they remember. There are grounds for thinking that at least some unverified cases belong to the same general type of case as verified cases. They may differ from verified cases only in the lesser amount of specific detail about the previous lives that the subjects can remember and express.[2] A subject of an unverified case who has a birthmark that is apparently appropriate for the mode of death that he describes—provided the birthmark has no normal explanation—has a stronger claim to having memories of a real previous life than a child without such a birthmark. I do not mean by this remark to dismiss the possibility that in some cases the child or his parents imagine or adapt the narrated details of a previous life to suit the birthmark; but I shall defer discussion of this possibility until later.

Third, we should remember that our judgments about whether a case is "weak" or "strong" with regard to what we consider evidence are of no interest or value to the subjects themselves. Those who have imaged memories believe they derive from a previous life they have lived, and they do so whether their memories are abundant or meager and whether other persons agree with them or do not. In a comprehensive study of this subject we should take into account the entire range of available cases—from those with little detail and slender evidence to those having many details and strong documentary support.

The first of the cases in the present chapter illustrates the occurrence in an unsolved case of many of the features found in solved ones. The subject (U Tinn Sein) began speaking about the previous life when he was between 3 and 4; he

[1]Nevertheless, hyperpigmented macules and other kinds of nevi ostensibly related to previous lives do figure in some important cases, and I devote Chapter 9 entirely to birthmarks of these types.

[2]In Chapter 1 I explained that I refer to cases for which no deceased person corresponding to the subject's statements has been found as "unsolved." I also mentioned there that several of my associates and I have published elsewhere data from series of unsolved cases and a discussion of their qualifications to be considered members of the same species as solved or verified cases (Cook et al., 1983a, 1983b).

recalled the mode of death in the previous life, and the death was violent; he longed insistently for the family of the previous life and thought he could find where he had lived; and he relived the previous personality's vocation in his play. In addition, he had a birthmark that he related to the death in the previous life. An ingredient missing from this case that is often found in other cases (especially in Burma) is a dream on the part of the subject's mother, or some other person, before or during the mother's pregnancy with the subject.

This case and the two following ones have in common the feature that the subjects were Burmese children who remembered previous lives as Japanese soldiers killed in Burma during World War II. I thought that I could assist readers who wish to compare the features of these cases by grouping them together. Later in this work I report other cases of the same type (Burmese subjects remembering previous lives as Japanese soldiers).

The remaining six cases of this chapter occurred in Turkey (two cases), Alaska (one case), Burma (two cases), and India (one case).

CASE REPORTS

THE CASE OF U TINN SEIN

Summary of the Case and Its Investigation

U Tinn Sein was born in Wundwin (near Meiktila) in Upper Burma on October 22, 1948. His parents were U Ba Thwin and Daw Nyein. They had one other child, a daughter older than U Tinn Sein. U Ba Thwin had been headman of the village; after retiring he practiced indigenous Burmese medicine.

When U Tinn Sein was born, his parents noticed a birthmark (a hyperpigmented macule) near the center of his chest (Figure 4-1); however, they attached no significance to it until Maung (as he then was) Tinn Sein himself drew attention to it, when he began speaking about a previous life.

Maung Tinn Sein was slow in learning to speak. He did not speak at all until he was 3, and his parents, alarmed by this backwardness, thought he was perhaps going to be dumb. Thereafter he did begin to speak, but he did not speak Burmese effectively until he was 6 or 7 years old.

When Maung Tinn Sein was between 3 and 4, his father beat him for some misdemeanor, and he cried out: "I am going back to Tokyo." Afterwards he began to tell details of a previous life. He said that he had been a Japanese soldier and that he had been killed when a bullet from an airplane struck him in the chest. He pointed to the birthmark on his chest as he said this. Maung Tinn Sein frequently expressed a wish to go to Tokyo, and he showed several behaviors characteristic of Japanese persons, but not of Burmese.

I first learned about the case in November 1972, when I was in Meiktila for the investigation of other cases. U Win Maung and I went to Wundwin where, on

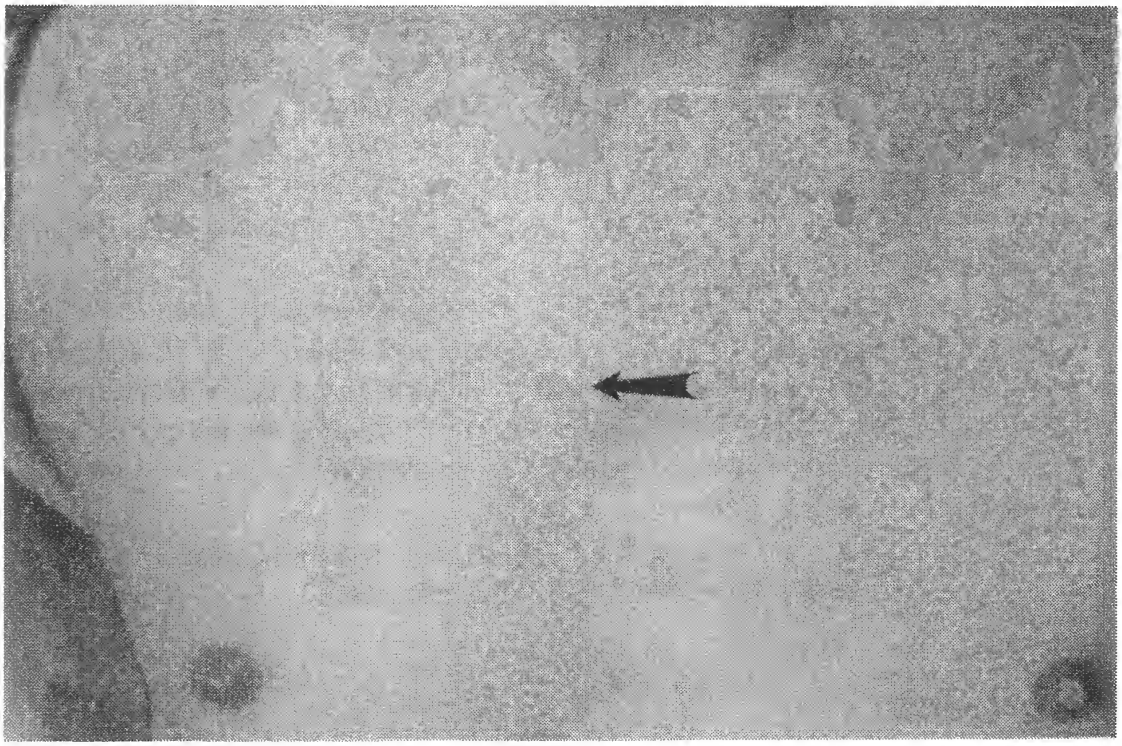

Figure 4-1 Birthmark on U Tinn Sein's chest as it appeared in November 1972, when he was 24 years old. The birthmark was an almost circular hyperpigmented macule about 1 centimeter in diameter.

November 4, we interviewed U Tinn Sein and his parents, U Ba Thwin and Daw Nyein. Daw Thein Nyunt, U Tinn Sein's maternal aunt, and U Aung Maw, an older cousin, furnished supplementary information during the interview.

On November 3, 1975, we were again in Wundwin and had further interviews with U Tinn Sein and his mother. In January 1977, U Win Maung visited U Tinn Sein and his parents again and obtained some additional information about the case. In February (of the same year) we were both in Wundwin and briefly met U Tinn Sein and his mother once more.

Statements Made by U Tinn Sein

By the time U Win Maung and I reached this case, U Tinn Sein was a young man of 24. He said then that he had completely forgotten the memories he had had of a previous life in Japan. The memories of his parents about what he had said earlier had also faded to some extent. The following paragraphs record what they still remembered of what he had said when a young child.

Maung Tinn Sein said that he had been a student in Tokyo and also a maker of confectionery and bakery products that were distributed all over Japan. He had a four-story building where he both produced his products and lived. His confections were made from corn, which he grew. Maung Tinn Sein never mentioned a wife, but said that he had four brothers and sisters.

When asked why he had joined the Japanese Army, Maung Tinn Sein replied that he was still a student[3] and was threatened with torture by pliers if he did not join the army. He hated the Emperor of Japan for conscripting him into the army.

When asked how he had died in the previous life, Maung Tinn Sein said that he had tried (with a rifle) to shoot down a low-flying enemy airplane and the pilot had fired back with a machine-gun. A bullet had struck him in the chest. (Maung Tinn Sein did not say what kind of airplane had attacked him or whether it was an American or British one.) He was killed near an air-raid shelter that was close to the Thane-taung Monastery in Wundwin. He further said that he had had a striped horse—a very clever animal—with him, and had left it by the side of the water pond near the Thane-taung Monastery. He had thrown a rifle into the pond—just when, he did not specify or remember. Maung Tinn Sein said that he could show where he (that is, the Japanese soldier) had thrown the rifle, so that it could be salvaged.

Maung Tinn Sein said he remembered something of experiences after death and before his birth. He said that he stayed (as a discarnate personality) near the Daw-lay pagoda and that he threw stones at bullock-carts and enjoyed this activity.[4] One day he saw U Ba Thwin driving past in his bullock-cart near the pagoda. He felt attracted to him and tried to get his attention by throwing a small stone at him. (U Ba Thwin did not notice this.) He then followed U Ba Thwin to his home and was reborn.

Verification of U Tinn Sein's Statements about His Postmortem Existence. It was correct that U Ba Thwin went to the area of Thane-taung Monastery to gather firewood. He did this once or twice a month for nearly a year just after the Japanese defeat in Burma, which took place in the spring of 1945. The distance between U Ba Thwin's home and the Thane-taung Monastery (to which U Tinn Sein took U Win Maung and me in 1975) is about 2 kilometers. The Daw-lay pagoda, where U Tinn Sein said he passed the inter-

[3]If the person whose life Maung Tinn Sein was remembering had still been a student when conscripted for the army, it is unlikely that he was the owner of a substantial confectionery business. However, a student might well have assisted others in a family business. Subjects of other cases have sometimes identified family businesses or property as belonging to them, or have talked in a way that led their parents to make such an inference. Jagdish Chandra (remembering the life of another young child) even used the expression "my car" in referring to an automobile that the father of that child had hired, but did not own.

[4]These are not necessarily imaginary stones. Persons in Burma claiming to remember experiences in a discarnate realm during the interval between a previous life and their birth sometimes say that they threw stones at living persons in order to harass them or sometimes "just for fun." (There seem to be few other sports or diversions in that realm.) And living persons in Burma have sometimes claimed that stones had landed on or near them during the period when the subjects who later remember these pranks say they had engaged in them.

These claimed memories of throwing stones during a discarnate existence provide, as it were, another side to the not infrequent reports from investigators of poltergeist cases that stones, bricks, pieces of wood, and other objects had been thrown about during the disturbances. Some reports of such cases may be found in Flammarion (1923), Stevenson (1972), and Zorab (1973).

val between the death of the Japanese soldier and the time when he (as a discarnate personality) followed U Ba Thwin home, is about 100 meters from the Thane-taung Monastery.

We did not ask U Ba Thwin why he stopped going out to gather firewood in 1946, but I think the following explanation is probably correct. The fierce fighting associated with the defeat of the Japanese Army in 1945 devastated the region and disrupted commerce. The inhabitants of the area would have had to gather their own firewood. After about a year firewood probably became available from organized dealers.

If U Ba Thwin stopped going to the area of the monastery to gather firewood in the spring or summer of 1946, and if the discarnate Japanese soldier followed him home while he was still doing this, a further interval must have elapsed before Daw Nyein became pregnant with Maung Tinn Sein, because he was not born until October 1948.

We asked U Ba Thwin whether he (or anyone else) had tried to find a Japanese rifle in the pond near the Thane-taung Monastery. They had not tried to do this. By the time the young Maung Tinn Sein mentioned the weapon it had become illegal for Burmese civilians to possess firearms; apart from this, the weapon would have been hopelessly rusted.

Maung Tinn Sein's Behavior Related to the Previous Life

Circumstances and Manner of Maung Tinn Sein's Speaking about the Previous Life. The young Maung Tinn Sein frequently said that he wanted to go to Tokyo. (He pronounced the word with the accent on the final syllable, as Japanese speakers do.) The commonest stimulus for such remarks was an airplane flying over. At such times Maung Tinn Sein would assemble his little property and announce his departure for Japan to rejoin his brothers and sisters there. (Unlike some subjects of these cases, he appears never actually to have tried to run away.) He said that if taken back to Tokyo he could find his way to his home (of the previous life) in that city.

Maung Tinn Sein's Interest in Japan and Japanese Persons. Maung Tinn Sein showed a marked fondness for Japan and Japanese persons. As a student he was much more interested in the geography of Japan than in that of any other country. He went to see every Japanese moving picture that came to his area. Such movies gave him the impression of being at home among familiar surroundings. In 1960, when Maung Tinn Sein was about 12 years old, some Japanese technicians came to Meiktila. When Maung Tinn Sein heard this news, he insisted on going to see the Japanese men. An aunt obligingly took him to Meiktila (25 kilometers to the south), where Maung Tinn Sein examined the Japanese visitors approvingly. However, he felt shy, and, unable to speak their language, he did not try to say anything to them; he seemed satisfied just to have seen them.

Maung Tinn Sein's Play at Being a Soldier. When Maung Tinn Sein was a small child, he played at soldiers, using sticks for guns. He called himself "Major," assigned lower ranks to the other children, and gave them orders.

Maung Tinn Sein's "Japanese" Traits.[5] Maung Tinn Sein did not like the sour and salty food so much appreciated by the Burmese. He was fond of sweet food. When a small child he had found a mess canteen left behind—along with much else—by the retreating Japanese soldiers, and he liked to eat out of it.

Maung Tinn Sein did not like to wear short pants or, later, the Burmese longyi. He preferred to wear trousers. When I met him in 1972 and 1975, he was wearing a longyi, but smilingly acknowledged that he still preferred to wear trousers.[6]

He worked hard and never refused any task assigned to him. He remarked that in "my country," meaning Japan, everyone goes to work when a siren sounds and remains at it until it sounds again. When he would come home from school and find his parents sitting in their house, he would rebuke them for being slothful. He asked them, shouting: "Why do you not go and do some work? At home we have to earn our bread by working."[7]

U Tinn Sein's parents said that he endured pain and discomfort with what seemed to them remarkably little complaint or none at all. As a young child he rarely cried when hurt. If he did happen to cry, his parents could get him to stop at once by assigning some work or errand to him.

U Ba Thwin was not able (in 1977) to remember whether his son had complained of the heat in Burma as a young child. However, U Tinn Sein himself said that he remembered finding the heat excessive when he was young. At the time he spoke about this with us, he was nearly 30 and was getting used to the heat.

[5]The description of certain traits as "Japanese" is far from satisfactory. As this work contains reports of 10 Burmese subjects who remembered previous lives as Japanese soldiers during World War II, I shall briefly explain here what I mean by the expression. I subsume several different types of behavior under this heading. For example, the subjects often complained about the spicy food and hot climate in Burma; in this they contrasted these features of life in Burma with the blander, sweeter food and the cooler climate of Japan. Many of the subjects showed preferences for wearing clothes, such as trousers, that are rare in Burma and usual in Japan. Some resisted the forms of worship in Burmese Buddhism. Some kneeled in a style typical of Japanese people but not of Burmans. Most of the subjects were noted for being hardworking and relatively insensitive to pain. Some of the reported traits were more characteristic of Japanese soldiers than of civilian Japanese people; for example, many of the subjects of this group resorted quickly to physical violence when disputes arose, and some showed tendencies to cruelty.

Few, if any, of the mentioned behaviors are found only in Japanese people or found always in them. We are concerned with behavior that is unusual for the subject's family and peers and more commonly found among Japanese people.

Five of the 10 subjects in this group were females (like Ma Tin Aung Myo, whose case I published earlier), and appraisal of their behavior must include evaluation of the extent to which they—as young girls or later—showed masculine traits.

[6]Maung Aung Htoo was another Burmese subject who remembered the previous life of a Japanese soldier, and he also persisted in wearing long trousers instead of the Burmese longyi. I have included a photograph of him wearing trousers in the report of his case. Maung Sein Win also preferred Japanese to Burmese clothing.

[7]Burma is not a nation of lazy people; but the Burmese live in a fertile land with an equable climate where adequate food can be had with relatively little trouble. Buddhism further influences the Burmese not to produce more than they need. In contrast, the Japanese live in a more severe climate and have three times the population of Burma in a land area not much more than half that of Burma. These conditions have contributed to making the Japanese an unusually hardworking people.

Maung Tinn Sein was harsh toward persons who quarreled. When he heard people rowing in the neighborhood, he would remark: "It is best to kill off people who quarrel. It saves trouble and we are not bothered." When he saw two of his playmates quarreling, he would intervene and beat up one or both of the combatants. He did not exhibit, however, the habit of slapping faces that was common among Japanese soldiers; and he was not otherwise an aggressive person. He spoke softly and never swore or cursed.

Other Behavior of Maung Tinn Sein Possibly Related to the Previous Life. The young Maung Tinn Sein was unusually interested in horses. This attraction might have been related to his claim that in the previous life the Japanese soldier he remembered being had had a horse.

Other Relevant Behavior of Maung Tinn Sein. Maung Tinn Sein exhibited no animosity toward British and American people, the enemies of Japan during World War II. He directed the only anger related to that war that he expressed at the Emperor of Japan for conscripting him. He had no phobia of airplanes or of firearms. He had no strong interest in making confectionery. He had contemplated trying to do this, but had not actually done so.

The Attitude of U Tinn Sein's Parents Toward His Memories

Maung Tinn Sein's parents in no way suppressed his statements about the previous life he claimed to remember; and they never reproved him for claiming to have been a Japanese soldier.

Comment. The majority of Burmese got along satisfactorily with the Japanese during the 3 years of the Japanese occupation of Burma. When the Japanese first arrived in Burma, many Burmese welcomed them as their liberators from British colonialism; although this hope proved illusory, the average Burmese person did not work up any hatred for the Japanese and would not feel any sense of shame or annoyance at the thought of having one reborn in his family. On the other hand, such an event would not give him any special pleasure either.

The complete acceptance by Maung Tinn Sein's parents of his statements about a previous life may have allowed them to forget details that could have been important. For example, although Maung Tinn Sein showed resistance to learning to speak Burmese, his parents could not remember whether he had spoken any strange language, such as Japanese, when he was young. They did not remember whether he had mentioned any names—other than Tokyo—but were certain that, if he had done so, they had forgotten them.

U Tinn Sein's Birthmark

Figure 4-1 shows U Tinn Sein's birthmark. It was a round hyperpigmented macule, located almost in the middle of the chest near the right sterno-costal junction and about 1 centimeter in diameter. It was neither elevated nor depressed.

U Tinn Sein had never had any pain or other discomfort in the region of this birthmark.

In 1977 I examined U Tinn Sein's back, searching for a birthmark that might correspond to a wound of exit, but found none. His parents had mentioned only one birthmark.

Other Relevant Medical Information. No other member of the family had a birthmark like U Tinn Sein's.

U Tinn Sein's Later Development

When I first met U Tinn Sein in 1972, he was still single. By 1975 he had married, and he and his wife had one child. He was working as a schoolteacher.

Up to the age of about 12, Maung Tinn Sein's longing for the Japanese people remained strong. (He was 12 when his aunt took him to see the Japanese men working in Meiktila.) But after that age he gradually forgot the details of the previous life he had remembered. He told us that he became "ashamed of telling such stories." When we asked him to explain what he meant by this, he said that he became weary of being questioned about his previous life, and this influenced him to stop talking about it and to say that he had forgotten about it (before he had actually done so). Later, he really did forget it. He was definitely *not* ashamed of remembering the life of a Japanese person. When U Win Maung and I interviewed him, he was affable with us and showed no hesitancy that I was aware of in talking about the previous life; but by that time he had no imaged memories that he could describe for us.

In 1975 he was still thinking occasionally of Japan and said that he still wished to return there. Even though he seemed no longer to remember any details of Japan, he had a yearning to go there "and see the old scenery again."

He had retained some of the preference for Japanese customs that he had earlier shown. Thus he still preferred sweet food over salty and sour food; and he said that he still liked hard work and to be fully engaged every day.[8]

Comment

Maung Tinn Sein made only one verifiable statement about the previous life. I refer to his claim to have seen (before his birth) his father on his bullock-cart near the Daw-lay pagoda outside Wundwin; however, this could certainly have been within Maung Tinn Sein's normal knowledge.

If Maung Tinn Sein was imagining a previous life as a Japanese soldier, one can reasonably ask why he would choose such a life with which to identify. His younger cousin, Maung Myo Min Thein (a report of whose case is also included in

[8]Other subjects whose behavioral memories persisted after their imaged ones had largely or entirely faded are: Ravi Shankar Gupta, Bishen Chand Kapoor, Ma Tin Aung Myo, Maung Sein Win, Sunita Singh, Nasruddin Shah, Sanjeev Sharma, and Bongkuch Promsin.

this work), later talked about the previous life of a respected monk, a much more meritorious one (for Burmese people) than that of a Japanese soldier. The Burmese, on the whole, would not feel either annoyance or pride at the thought of a Japanese soldier being born among them. However, given a choice most would probably prefer to have a British or American person reborn in their family instead of a Japanese one. Soon after the Japanese occupation of Burma a strong preference for the British as rulers developed among most of the Burmese. (See Appendix B.)

If the young Maung Tinn Sein described the life of a real Japanese soldier who was killed in the manner he described, his statements provide an explanation which we otherwise lack for why he had a moderately large birthmark at a particular place on his body.

Comment on Maung Tinn Sein's Resistance to Learning Burmese. One might expect that children who remember previous lives as inhabitants of a country different from that of their parents would often spontaneously speak the language of the claimed previous life. In the majority of "international cases," we obtain no reports of the subject speaking a language foreign to his parents. Nevertheless, in a small number of these international cases informants have claimed that the subject did this. The language he spoke, however, was usually not properly identified, and, since the child's parents did not encourage it, the child later forgot it and learned their language. The case of Nawal Daw in Lebanon (Stevenson, 1974c) is an example of this group. Sometimes parents say that the subject resisted learning their language or was backward in doing so. Ma Tin Aung Myo appears to have shown such a glossophobia, as I call this behavior. Informants for another Lebanese case, that of Wafiq Helal, reported a similar slowness to learn his native language. He made fragmentary allusions to a previous life in Germany and was said to have spoken words incomprehensible to his family. These might have been German, but that was never proven. It was much more certain, however, that Wafiq learned Arabic reluctantly and imperfectly. (I found judgment in this case difficult, however, because the subject appeared to me to be mentally retarded.) We have also found instances in which the subject was reported to show a special interest in the language of the presumed previous life and aptitude for that language. An example of this occurred in the case of Vinita Jha.

THE CASE OF MAUNG SEIN WIN

Summary of the Case and Its Investigation

Maung Sein Win was born on September 4, 1957, in Kyeeni village, which is about 15-16 kilometers northwest of Pyawbwe, in Upper Burma. His parents were U Hla Soung and Daw Ma Gyi. U Hla Soung was a blacksmith. Maung Sein Win was the oldest of five children in his family.

When Daw Ma Gyi was pregnant with Maung Sein Win, she dreamed that a foreign soldier—apparently Japanese, but she was not sure of this—was following her. She became frightened and ran away. The soldier then ran after her. Daw Ma

Gyi told him not to follow her, but he did not seem to understand, and she did not understand what he said in reply. The dream ended at that point.

Maung Sein Win had two birthmarks, on his upper left chest and left shoulder (posteriorly). He began to speak when he was 15 months old, but at first he spoke words that were unintelligible to his parents, and he did not become fluent in Burmese until he was about 6.

As a young child Maung Sein Win showed a marked phobia of airplanes and other behavior that was unusual for his family. When he was 6 years old (apparently not before), he began to refer to a previous life and said that he had been a Japanese soldier who was shot at from an airplane and died immediately.

When Maung Sein Win was 8, his parents sent him to a monastery school where he remained for 2 years. After a year at home, he was sent to a primary school near Kyeeni, and he continued his education up to the eighth grade. He then discontinued for economic reasons. At the age of 18 he became an apprentice in an ironworks in Meiktila, the nearest large town, and rapidly learned how to work with iron. After a short period of work as an employee in Yamethin (another large town of the region), he returned to the area of his own village, married, and began working—like his father—as a blacksmith. After living for a few months with his family in Kyeeni, he moved to the neighboring village of Thigone, where his wife's family lived. Thigone and Kyeeni are about 0.5 kilometer apart; they are almost adjoining villages, separated by a sandy water course.

U Win Maung and I first met Maung Sein Win in March 1978, when we went to Thigone for the investigation of another case. We were fortunate to have with us U Nu, a native of Pyawbwe, who found, studied, and helped in the investigation of many other cases in Upper Burma. Someone in the village informed us about Maung Sein Win, and we met and talked with him briefly. The following year, in March 1979, we again met and talked with him but again only briefly. On both these occasions he was the sole informant for his case. However, in March 1980 we interviewed his parents with regard to what Maung Sein Win had said about the previous life, his unusual behavior, and his birthmarks. We obtained some additional background information from two villagers, U Tun Pe and U Mya Maung, who had been in Thigone during the Japanese occupation of Burma. We also had a short interview with Maung Sein Win in 1980.

In 1979 U Nu returned to Thigone by himself and recorded an extensive autobiographical statement from Maung Sein Win. In addition, he interviewed Maung Sein Win's mother, Daw Ma Gyi. He also recorded a statement from U Mya Maung, an elderly villager of Thigone who had lived in the area during the Japanese occupation of Burma. U Mya Maung's granddaughter had married Maung Sein Win. (U Win Maung and I had met him in 1980, but we did not interview him as extensively as U Nu had.) Daw Hnin Aye translated U Nu's notes of his 1979 interviews for me, and I have used them in preparing this report. U Nu's interviews took place in 1979 before my second visit to Thigone (with U Win Maung and U Nu), but I did not receive the translation of his notes until 1983.

Relevant Background Information

The region of Pyawbwe became a major battleground in the spring of 1945 as the British Army advanced against the Japanese Army occupying Burma. (Pyawbwe was captured on April 10; see Appendix B.) The British advance was preceded and accompanied by bombing and strafing by airplanes. The Burmese villagers usually left the villages, at least during the daytime, and tried to survive in the surrounding fields and jungle.

Maung Sein Win's father, U Hla Soung, had lived in Kyeeni during World War II. He had been a boy of about 10 in 1945. He recalled that four or five Japanese soldiers were killed within 100 meters of where he lived. U Tun Pe, who was a few years older than U Hla Soung (and who had also been living in the area during the war), said that three other Japanese soldiers died somewhat farther away from the center of Kyeeni. U Mya Maung (who was much older and had been an adult during the war) remembered that several Japanese soldiers had been killed at the nearby village of Thigone, but he thought that most of the Japanese killed in that particular area had died in Kyeeni.

Statements Made by Maung Sein Win

Maung Sein Win's parents remembered (in 1979 and 1980) few details of what he had said about the previous life when younger. (Because of the difficulty they had in understanding him when he was first learning to speak, he may well have made more statements than they could comprehend, and this may account, to some extent, for the paucity of what they could later tell us.)

He said that he had been a Japanese soldier. He had lived in Tokyo, where his parents were living and also his brothers and sisters.

Maung Sein Win did not remember what had been the occupation of the person whose life he recalled before he became a soldier. However, he did recall that in the previous life he had been trained in judo and karate; and he remembered also that as a soldier he had used neither alcohol nor tobacco.

According to U Hla Soung, Maung Sein Win had said that he died of the wounds from a bomb. (This did not accord with Maung Sein Win's statements to us on two different occasions: that he had been killed by a bullet fired from an airplane.)

Maung Sein Win's Statements in 1979 and 1980. Maung Sein Win was 21 years old when we first met him in 1978. He was a year older when he made his long autobiographical statement. He included in it some details of the previous life that his parents did not mention in telling us about the statements he had made when he was younger.

He recalled that his previous parents were still living in Japan when he left for Burma. He had five brothers and sisters, but could not remember their names. He was unmarried.

He remembered being in a Japanese gun emplacement in a toddy palm grove, east of the monastery and south of the village (of Kyeeni), near the main

road between Mandalay and Rangoon. There were about 100 men in his unit. He was hit by a bullet from a low-flying airplane that came over to detect the location of the Japanese artillery. He died immediately after being wounded.

Maung Sein Win had a vague memory of the time when the Japanese soldier was dying or perhaps of the period just after his death. He felt sad about dying in a foreign land and realized that he would never again see his parents, brothers, or sisters. (He seems to have had no memories that we could definitely place in the interval between the soldier's death and his birth.)

Maung Sein Win's Behavior Related to the Previous Life

Circumstances and Manner of Maung Sein Win's Speaking about the Previous Life. When Maung Sein Win first began to speak, he used a language that was incomprehensible to his parents. They afterward assumed that this was Japanese, but no person able to understand the Japanese language ever verified that it was. (There were almost no Japanese persons in Upper Burma during the early 1960s.) Maung Sein Win not only spoke in a strange language; he did not learn to speak Burmese effectively until he was about 6 years of age. His family seriously considered that he might be dumb. (U Tinn Sein's family had thought the same about him.) They used gestures and signs to get him to carry out simple instructions. For example, his mother said that she gave him a cup and gestured to him that he should fill it with water; he did this. In this way they inculcated the rudiments of Burmese in him. They did not send him to school until they thought he could speak Burmese well enough to benefit from schooling, and he was 8 by that time. They thought that he could not pronounce Burmese words and phrases correctly until he was about 10 years old.

Maung Sein Win said (in 1979) that the sight of a Japanese soldier's cap (among some articles left by the Japanese soldiers and kept by Burmese villagers) had first stimulated his memories of having been a Japanese soldier in a previous life. He said he was 9 years old at this time, but his father, U Hla Soung, told us that he had already communicated his awareness of having been a Japanese soldier to the family when he was about 6 years old.

Maung Sein Win's Phobia of Airplanes. U Hla Soung said that Maung Sein Win had a severe phobia of airplanes when he was a young child. The phobia was noticeable when Maung Sein Win was 4 years old, and this was about 2 years before he spoke about the previous life and said that he had been a Japanese soldier.[9] U Hla Soung said that Maung Sein Win "used to dive into the house whenever he saw an airplane flying over." Daw Ma Gyi remembered that when airplanes flew over their village, Maung Sein Win would run down to the ground—Burmese village houses are usually raised above the ground on posts—and dig a hole in the sand in which he would take cover.

[9]Other subjects who have shown phobias before they could speak and communicate verbal information about the previous life are Shamlinie Prema, Sujith Lakmal Jayaratne, and Lal Jayasooria.

Maung Sein Win's phobia of airplanes persisted until he was about 12 years of age.

Maung Sein Win himself remembered (in 1979) that he was "very afraid" of airplanes when he was young, and that at the sound of an airplane he would dig a hole in the sand and hide in it.

Maung Sein Win's Play at Being a Soldier. Maung Sein Win remembered that after he found the Japanese soldier's cap (mentioned above), he would put the cap on and play at being a soldier and fighting. His parents forbade him to do this, thinking that he would get hurt. (They also considered it inauspicious and believed that children's playing at soldiering might somehow bring on another war.)

Maung Sein Win's "Japanese" Traits. Maung Sein Win had had, and to some extent still had in 1980, a number of traits that are unusual for Burmese people, but commonly shown by Japanese people. He said, for example, that he preferred Japanese styles of clothing; but at the times of our meeting him he was dressed in a shirt and longyi in normal Burmese fashion.

He found the climate of Burma too hot. He also had a definite preference for such foods as raw or partly cooked fish, raw eggs, sweet food, and strong tea. (These are foods that Japanese people appreciate.) He was so fond of sweet substances that he took a piece of jaggery—a kind of sugar made from the sap of the palm tree—before going to sleep.

He became vexed when anyone mentioned British or American people.

He thought that compared with other Burmese children he was more hard-working, less sensitive to pain, and at times inclined toward harshness.

He thought that he had some resistance toward the style of worship among Burmese Buddhists; it was unnatural for him to make obeisance to Buddhist monks as the average Burman readily does.

U Win Maung and I questioned Maung Sein Win's parents about their observations of "Japanese" traits in Maung Sein Win. U Hla Soung alone answered our questions, but Daw Ma Gyi was present during the review of these traits, and she concurred in her husband's answers. They had observed a trait that Maung Sein Win had not himself mentioned: When he had been young, he had sometimes expressed a longing to return to Japan.[10]

They had noticed that he preferred Japanese styles of dress, complained of the heat in Burma, and was annoyed when the British or Americans were mentioned.

Concerning Maung Sein Win's preferences for foods, they had noticed that he liked sweet dishes. Daw Ma Gyi said (in her interview with U Nu) that she had

[10]Maung Sein Win remembered an episode that occurred when he was perhaps 11 or 12 years old and a novice in the monastery where he was being educated. A Japanese delegation concerned with war graves visited the area to collect bones of Japanese soldiers for removal and proper interment in Japan. Maung Sein Win hid from them fearing that they might try to take him back to Japan. By this age he had become strongly attached to his parents and the village of his birth. However, the episode shows the strength of his conviction that he had been and, in a sense, still was Japanese.

especially noticed how fond of sweet foods Maung Sein Win had been, and she exploited this by giving him some jaggery whenever he became angry or otherwise distressed; he would always stop crying when given a piece of jaggery. She had also noticed his fondness for eggs and mentioned that he liked tomatoes; but she did not remember his wish for raw or partly cooked fish and strong tea.

Maung Sein Win's parents had not observed any resistance on his part to the customs of worship followed by Burmese Buddhists. They agreed that he was more hardworking and less sensitive to pain than other Burmese children.

Other Behavior of Maung Sein Win Possibly Related to the Previous Life. Maung Sein Win had a quick temper, and his mother noticed that in a quarrel with other children he would be the first to hit. Once a cow he was looking after strayed away and seemed to be lost. Maung Sein Win went to look for her, came home without having found her, and found that the cow had already come home by herself. He became furious, beat the cow, and began to cry. His mother calmed him with a piece of jaggery.

Maung Sein Win said that he had a technical aptitude, especially for making parts of machinery, that he thought he had carried over from the previous life. (He did not say that he had been a mechanic in that life.) In 1979 he combined his technical aptitude and his ability to work hard when he built his own house by himself.

Comment. A quick temper is far from being a specific trait of Japanese people, but the Japanese soldiers in Burma had a reputation for reacting quickly, and sometimes cruelly, toward persons who thwarted them. Maung Sein Win acknowledged that he had had a quick temper ever since he had been a young child, and he seemed to imply by this remark that the trait derived from the previous life he remembered.

I do not believe that Maung Sein Win consciously tried to improve his case when he said that he thought he had carried over an aptitude for mechanical procedures from the previous life. At the same time, to keep this statement in proper perspective, I should remind readers that his father was a blacksmith and must have had some mechanical aptitude himself.

Maung Sein Win's Loneliness as a Child

Maung Sein Win recalled in 1979 that he had been lonely as a child. He did not care to play with his brothers and sisters, who engaged in Burmese games that he found strange.

His mother also remembered that Maung Sein Win stayed apart from other children. He would go into the woods by himself.

The Effect of a Scalding on Maung Sein Win's Memories

When Maung Sein Win was about 11, he was carrying a kettle of hot water when an airplane flew overhead. He became so frightened that he dropped the ket-

tle and scalded himself badly. The burn then became infected. Apparently he became seriously ill and possibly delirious. He remembered that during this illness "my past life as a Japanese soldier was vividly revealed to me." However, afterwards, his memories of the previous life became fainter.[11]

Maung Sein Win's Birthmarks

Maung Sein Win himself pointed out to U Win Maung and me in 1978 the large birthmark on the back of his left shoulder (Figure 4-2). It was ovoid in shape, markedly puckered, and about 2 centimeters wide and about 2.5 centimeters long. Daw Ma Gyi told U Nu in 1979 that Maung Sein Win had been born with this "scar" (as she called it) "on his back at the tip of his shoulder blade."

We did not learn that Maung Sein Win had another birthmark until 1980, when we asked his parents what they had noticed at his birth. U Hla Soung said that Maung Sein Win had had a birthmark on the left upper chest, and he pointed as he spoke to the front part of his own upper left chest. At first he did not remember that Maung Sein Win also had had a birthmark on his upper left back, but when this was mentioned to him, he then said that he did remember that birthmark also. With this information we examined Maung Sein Win's anterior upper left chest and found there a barely visible mark that was in the area to which U Hla Soung referred. It was generally round and much smaller than the birthmark on the back of Maung Sein Win's chest. It was about 7-8 millimeters in diameter and seemed to be slightly puckered. I have thought it necessary to indicate its location with an arrow in Figure 4-3.

Comment. The small round birthmark on the front of Maung Sein Win's chest has the appearance of the scar of a bullet wound of entry, and the larger birthmark at the back of the chest one of a bullet wound of exit.[12] It seems unlikely that a wound made by a bomb would have the round shape of the birthmark on the front of Maung Sein Win's chest. It accords better with his statement that a bullet from an airplane killed him.

Except when a weapon is fired while held in contact with the body or is fired at extremely short range, exit wounds from bullets are nearly always larger than entrance wounds (Di Maio, 1985; Fackler, 1988; Fatteh, 1976; Gordon and Shapiro, 1982; Simpson and Knight, 1947/1985). I have made an assumption in this case that may be unwarranted, which is that the Japanese soldier whose life Maung Sein Win remembered was standing up and perhaps aiming at the airplane that shot at him. If that was

[11]Subjects of other cases have sometimes noticed that memories of previous lives have first occurred to them during an illness or have become clearer during one. Examples of this occurred in the cases of Vinita Jha, Maung Yin Maung, Sanjeev Sharma, and Ma Mu Mu.

Subjects have also sometimes noticed that following an injury or illness memories of a previous life have diminished or completely faded. The Ven. U Sobhana said that his memories diminished after an illness. In Burma informants seem sometimes to identify scalding with the fading of memories. The cases of Maung Tin Win and Ma Win Tar illustrate this sequence, as does Maung Sein Win's case.

[12]Altogether 18 subjects have had two birthmarks corresponding to bullet wounds of entry and exit, and I give a list of them in Table 12-1.

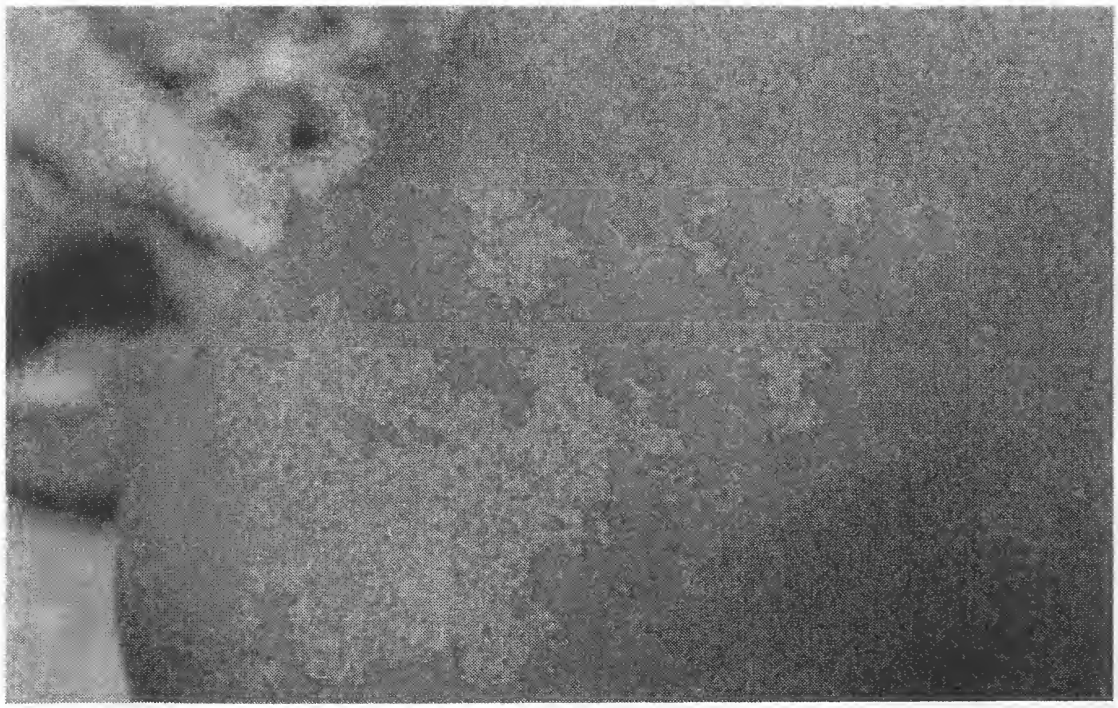

Figure 4-2 Birthmark on the left upper back of Maung Sein Win as it appeared in March 1978, when he was 20 years old. The birthmark was markedly puckered, ovoid in shape and approximately 2 centimeters wide and 2.5 centimeters long. It apparently corresponded to a wound of exit.

the soldier's posture, the birthmark on the upper (front) chest of Maung Sein Win corresponds to a wound of entry, while that on his upper back corresponds to a wound of exit. However, if the soldier was lying flat on his abdomen, the airplane's bullet would have entered at his back. That Maung Sein Win told us about the birthmark on his back signifies little for this question; this birthmark might have been uppermost in his memory either because the Japanese soldier was in fact hit at that site or because that birthmark is much larger and more prominent than the one on the front of his chest.

Two birthmarks in other cases (Maung Aye Kyaw and Maung Than Htay) that I am fairly certain correspond to wounds of entry are closely similar in size and appearance to the larger of Maung Sein Win's birthmarks, which I am here supposing to correspond with a wound of exit.

Maung Sein Win's Physical Appearance

Daw Ma Gyi said that Maung Sein Win did not have "the appearance of a Burmese baby." U Hla Soung said of him: "By observing the way he talks, walks, etc., I believe he is the reincarnation of a Japanese soldier."

Comment. Informants have described other Burmese subjects who claim to remember the lives of Japanese soldiers as "Japanese-looking." I am not sufficiently expert in physiognomy to claim that I can distinguish a Burmese from a Japanese person solely by physical (mainly facial) appearance. However, other

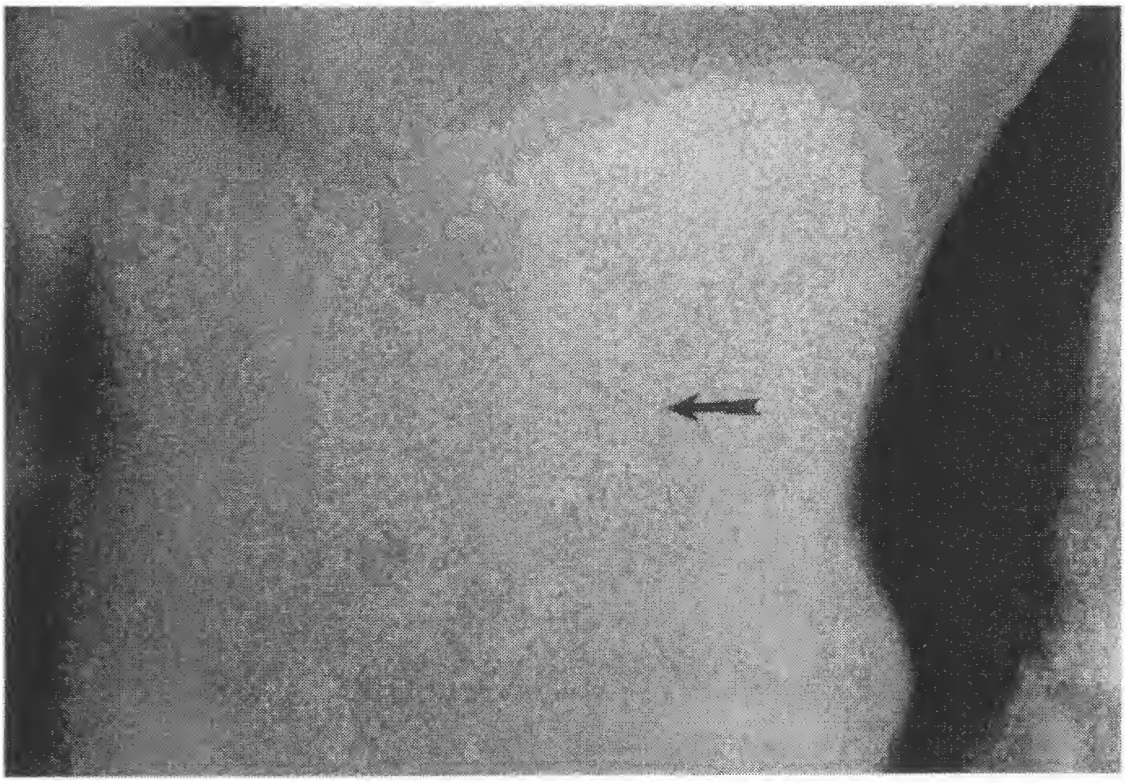

Figure 4-3 Birthmark on the upper left chest of Maung Sein Win as it appeared in March 1980, when he was 22 years old. The birthmark, which is barely visible in the photograph, was a slightly puckered round area about 7-8 millimeters in diameter. This birthmark apparently corresponded to a wound of entry.

persons whose judgment I respect, such as U Win Maung and Daw Hnin Aye, have sometimes said they thought a subject of this group looked "more like a Japanese than a Burmese person." I cannot ignore such statements, while at the same time I wish that we could arrange a test in which the persons asked to judge knew nothing about whether a face included in the test belonged to that of a Burmese subject claiming to have been a Japanese in a previous life or was that of one who said he had had a previous life as a Burmese person.

Maung Sein Win's Later Development

In 1979 Maung Sein Win told us (U Win Maung, U Nu, and myself) that he still remembered what he had previously recalled of the previous life. It was also in 1979 that he gave a long statement about his memories—imaged and behavioral—to U Nu. I was therefore somewhat surprised when, in 1980, he said that he no longer had any memories of the previous life. I do not understand why, having preserved some memories—although never abundant ones—for so many years, he seemed to lose them all within a year.

In 1979 he still had some behavioral memories, as I have described in a previous section of this report.

In 1980 U Win Maung thought that Maung Sein Win spoke Burmese with some foreign accent.

THE CASE OF MAUNG MYINT AUNG

Summary of the Case and Its Investigation

Maung Myint Aung was born in May 1972 in the village of Magyibin, which is located about 1.5 kilometers south of Pyawbwe in Upper Burma. It is 400 kilometers north of Rangoon. His parents were U Nyi Tin and his wife, Daw Tin Hla. U Nyi Tin was a cultivator of modest means. Maung Myint Aung was the youngest of their nine children.

When Maung Myint Aung was born, he was found to have a large horizontal linear birthmark on his neck (Figure 4-4). When he was about 3, he began to say that he was Japanese. Thereafter, he made a small number of statements about the life and death of the Japanese soldier he claimed to have been. None of these have been verified.

Maung Myint Aung also showed some behavior that was unusual for his family, and some of this I classify as "Japanese" traits.

U Nu of Pyawbwe, whose valuable assistance in the study of Maung Sein Win's case and many other cases in Upper Burma I have already mentioned, took us to the case of Maung Myint Aung. Nearly all our information about the case derives from a single long visit to Maung Myint Aung and his parents at Magyibin on March 11, 1980. Maung Myint Aung's mother, Daw Tin Hla, seemed extremely shy and contributed almost no information. What we learned therefore came almost entirely from U Nyi Tin, although Maung Myint Aung himself gave a little information.

In February 1984 Daw Hnin Aye, at my request, returned to Magyibin and obtained some further information about the case from Daw Tin Hla and Maung Myint Aung. (U Nyi Tin was out of the village at this time.)

Statements Made by Maung Myint Aung

Maung Myint Aung claimed to remember some details of a previous life in Japan. He said that he had been the oldest of seven children. His father had died, but his mother "was still alive" (referring presumably to the date when the Japanese soldier left Japan or perhaps last heard from his mother while he was in Burma). He was unmarried. He did not give a name of the Japanese soldier or state his rank. He also gave no address for where he had lived in Japan. There was a suggestion, from Maung Myint Aung's offer to fetch money from Japan, that the Japanese soldier had been, if not prosperous, at least better off economically than was U Nyi Tin; but Maung Myint Aung never said this explicitly.

Another cluster of Maung Myint Aung's memories concerned the death in the previous life. He said that he had been in the Japanese Army that retreated

Figure 4-4 Birthmark on Maung Myint Aung's neck as it appeared in 1980, when he was almost 8 years old. With Maung Myint Aung's head in the position shown, the birthmark was a linear area running horizontally across the neck.

before the advance of the British Army. He retreated as far as Rangoon and found himself, along with four friends, at the zoo, where they were in danger of being captured. Preferring death to capture, they all committed suicide. Although the Japanese soldier had his gun with him, he killed himself by slitting his throat with a large knife, or perhaps a bayonet.[13]

Maung Myint Aung said that after the death of the Japanese soldier he had stayed at the Rangoon zoo as a discarnate personality. He said that he saw U Nyi Tin at the zoo and that U Nyi Tin "had a scare" while he was at the zoo. The discarnate Japanese soldier then followed U Nyi Tin back to Magyibin, where he became reborn as his child.

Comment. The Japanese Army retreating from the victorious British Army (which by then units of the Burmese Defense Army had joined) were in a desperate situation when the British entered Rangoon early in May 1945. (See Appendix B.) The Japanese soldier about whom Maung Myint Aung was talking, if he existed, must have been among one of the isolated groups of Japanese soldiers in Rangoon whom the British and Burmese were then engaged in rounding up. We can date his death with fair closeness to the first 2 weeks of May 1945.

[13]In describing this weapon, Maung Myint Aung used the Burmese word *dah*, which refers to any kind of cutting instrument from a small kitchen knife to a large sword, including a bayonet.

U Nyi Tin recalled that he had gone to the zoo in Rangoon, but he could not remember that he had been scared there.[14] I did not learn when he had gone to the zoo in relation to the beginning of Daw Tin Hla's pregnancy with Maung Myint Aung.

Maung Myint Aung's Behavior Related to the Previous Life

Circumstances and Manner of Maung Myint Aung's Speaking about the Previous Life. Maung Myint Aung's first statements about the previous life occurred on a rainy night when he was about 3 years old. He said that he longed for Japan and did not want to stay in Magyibin. Then he went on to describe the scene at the Rangoon zoo and how he had followed his father home to Magyibin.

Thereafter Maung Myint Aung tended to talk about the previous life on cloudy days, and therefore especially during the monsoon season of the late summer and autumn. He was particularly likely to talk about the previous life at night, just before he went to sleep.[15] He talked about it often, but not every day.

U Nyi Tin once commented that the family had less money than it had had previously. On hearing this, Maung Myint Aung told him not to worry, because he could obtain money from Japan. He would afterwards say that he would go to Japan and bring back some money. However, he asked his father not to go with him, because the journey to Japan was too expensive. He did not say where in Japan he would go or whom there he would visit. He continued making these proposals about going to Japan until he was around 7 years old, which was the year before we met him.

Maung Myint Aung seemed depressed when he spoke about the previous life, but he did not cry.

Maung Myint Aung's Play at Being a Soldier. Maung Myint Aung liked to play at being a soldier. He organized games of soldiers among his playmates, tended to be the leader in them, and called himself an officer.

Maung Myint Aung's "Japanese" Traits. Maung Myint Aung had a preference for sweet foods, as do most Japanese people.

When he was young, he showed some resistance to learning the forms of worship in Burmese Buddhism and tended to worship in a style unfamiliar to his parents. He later conformed to the style of worship among Burmese Buddhists.

[14]Maung Myint Aung's remark suggested, without saying so clearly, that the discarnate Japanese soldier whose life he remembered had done something to frighten U Nyi Tin. U Tinn Sein recalled throwing stones (while he was a discarnate personality), but Maung Myint Aung did not say that he had done this.

[15]Other subjects have tended to talk about the previous life more at one time of day than at another. The periods just before going to sleep and just after awakening have been often noted as times when subjects talk more freely about the previous life than they do at other times. Ratana Wongsombat was such a subject, and my report of her case includes a list of other subjects who talked about the previous life more at one time of day than another (Stevenson, 1983a, p. 37).

Informants in Burma often remark that the subjects talk more about the previous lives they remember on "dark and gloomy [presumably cloudy] days." I have supposed that on such days the children are not playing outdoors, but are instead idle in the house and perhaps more likely to have memories come into consciousness.

He also knelt on his knees as Japanese people do and Burmese ones almost never do.

Compared with other Burmese children, Maung Myint Aung was hardworking and relatively insensitive to pain or physical discomfort.

He was noted to be somewhat harsh (although not cruel) in his attitude toward other persons. His father described his behavior as tending to be "crude, like that of a rough and ready soldier."

Maung Myint Aung became disturbed by any remark adverse to the Japanese people. For example, he did not like to be told that a Japanese soccer team had lost a match.

U Nyi Tin's Relations with the Japanese Army

The relations between the Japanese Army occupying Burma and the Burmese people were generally untroubled, but in some regions they were appallingly bad; and everywhere there would be exceptions to the relationship generally prevailing in a particular region. Thus, individual Japanese soldiers or sections of soldiers might be arrogant and cruel, while others nearby were friendly and kind to the Burmese.

U Nyi Tin had had a good relationship with the Japanese Army. He worked with them for about 3 years—almost the duration of their occupation of Burma (1942-45)—as a laborer loading arms and ammunition. He said that he "became most friendly with them." He added that in the area of Magyibin the Japanese had behaved well. U Nu—who was living in the area during the occupation—confirmed this opinion. He mentioned that the Japanese Army had a unit in the area whose members had treated the Burmese well. Some of them learned to speak English and Burmese, and they saw that their workers had adequate rations.[16]

Maung Myint Aung's Birthmark

Figure 4-4 (from a photograph that I took) shows the prominent birthmark on Maung Myint Aung's neck as it appeared when he was almost 8 years old, in 1980. The mark is nearly horizontal and extends almost across the whole front of the neck. However, it was more prominent in the middle of the neck, where it seemed slightly elevated compared with the skin above and below it. Figure 4-5 (from a photograph that U Win Maung took) shows the birthmark when Maung Myint Aung extended his head farther than he had for Figure 4-4. In it the mark appears as an area of slightly increased pigmentation about 1 centimeter wide and extending across the neck.

Figure 4-6 is the first of a group of photographs of fatal wounds that I have included to illustrate some of the wounds to which I believe the birthmarks correspond. It shows the gaping wound of a man who cut his own throat suicidally. This man was right-handed and began his self-inflicted wounds on the left side of

[16]Yet in or around Pyawbwe stragglers from the Japanese Army were caught and killed by the Burmese. The case of Ma Win Tar, which I describe later, is an apparent example of this.

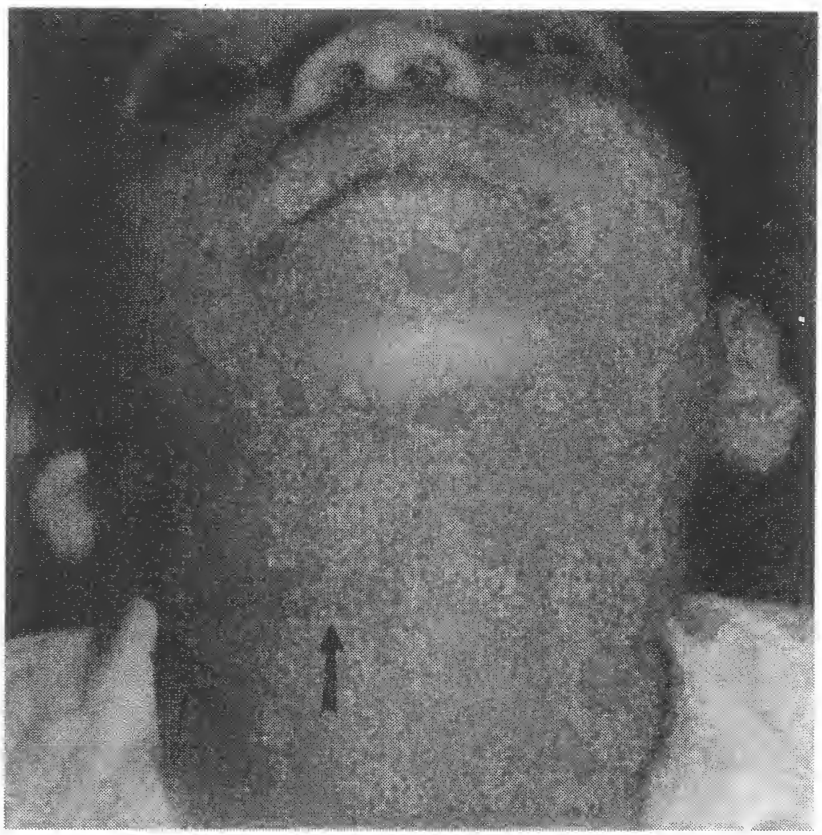

Figure 4-5 Birthmark on Maung Myint Aung's neck as it appeared in 1980. When the subject's head was extended, the birthmark appeared as a linear area of increased pigmentation about 1 centimeter wide extending across the neck.

Figure 4-6 Neck wound of a man in Virginia who committed suicide by cutting his own throat. (Courtesy of Dr. David Wiecking.)

the neck, where several smaller wounds can be seen leading into the main central wound. These smaller wounds are probably tentative cuts or "hesitation wounds" that persons who cut their own throats sometimes make before they execute the deeper, fatal slash (Kerr, 1939; Littlejohn, 1925).

Maung Myint Aung was left-handed, and he said that the Japanese soldier whose life he remembered had been left-handed also. I did not observe any subsidiary birthmarks on the right side of his neck that might have corresponded to the beginnings of additional cuts or "hesitation wounds."

Other Relevant Medical Information. Maung Myint Aung's birthmark had not changed in position or appearance between his birth and the time of our photographing it in 1980.

Daw Tin Hla's pregnancy with Maung Myint Aung was normal.

Maung Myint Aung's Later Development

When Daw Hnin Aye met Maung Myint Aung in February 1984, he was almost 12 years old. He was in good health and attending school in the 3rd grade. Although he had never failed any grades, he was somewhat behind his peers.

Maung Myint Aung said that he no longer remembered the previous life, but he still had some behavioral memories. For example, he liked to play at being a "Japanese officer." He still had a special fondness for Japan and also for military life. He said he wished to be a soldier when he grew up.

He was still unusually fond of sweet foods such as jaggery and *kyanthagar* (a candy made from molasses, somewhat like toffee). He even added sugar to his rice. He did not like the chilies and hot curries commonly eaten in Burma.

THE CASE OF LÛTFİ SARIKAYA

I met Lûtfi Sarıkaya briefly in March 1973, when I visited his school at Havutlu, a village about 12 kilometers from Adana, which is the largest city of south central Turkey. (Reşat Bayer was with me.) Lûtfi was born in Havutlu in 1962. His parents were Bedir Sarıkaya and his wife, Zeynep. They were Alevis. Bedir had died by the time we met Lûtfi, and I did not learn what his occupation had been.

Lûtfi told us that he remembered only a few details of a previous life. He recalled that he had been a young man of between 20 and 25 years, married, and with two children. He was going to work one day when a man stabbed him in the chest. Lûtfi showed us a birthmark on his chest that he said derived from the stabbing.

On another visit to Adana and Havutlu, in October 1973, Reşat Bayer met Lûtfi once again and also met his mother, Zeynep Sarıkaya. Lûtfi himself had nothing more to add to what he had told us earlier in March; but his mother was able to add a few more details about the case.

She said that Lûtfi had begun to speak when he was 2 years old, but had not talked about a previous life until he was 6. She remembered that his first remark

about it was: "Mama, this house is not ours." Zeynep Sarıkaya asked Lûtfi where his house was. He then pointed in a direction and said: "On the road to Karataş." (Karataş is a seaside resort on the Mediterranean coast of Turkey. It is about 45 kilometers south of Adana. Havutlu lies on the road between Adana and Karataş.)

Later, Lûtfi gave an account of how he had been killed in the previous life. He said that he had been riding on a horse when someone had stabbed him with a knife five or six times, and he had died. He said that he had had two sons and thought that he could recognize them if he could meet them again; but he added that he did not know the place where his (previous) house was located. He could not recall the name of the person he had been in the previous life, the names of that person's parents, or the village in the direction of Karataş where they had lived.

Zeynep Sarıkaya had had a dream sometime before Lûtfi's birth—she did not recall how long before. In the dream, two men came to visit her; one went away but the other remained. Zeynep asked the one who remained where he came from. He said that he came from "here" (meaning Havutlu), but she did not recognize him as anyone she knew. The dream therefore gave no clues about the identity of the person whose life Lûtfi claimed to remember.

Lûtfi's Birthmarks

When Reşat Bayer learned that Lûtfi had told his mother that his assassin (of the previous life) had delivered five or six stabs with a knife, he examined Lûtfi's chest again to see whether he had other birthmarks additional to the large one shown in Figure 4-7. (This was the only one I had noticed in March 1973, but we had not searched carefully for others.) He then found three other less distinct marks on Lûtfi's chest. One of these can be seen faintly in the 5 o'clock position in relation to the right nipple. The others are not visible on the photograph.

The principal birthmark in Figure 4-7 was an approximately rectangular area of decreased pigmentation.[17] It lay over the ribs about halfway between the right nipple and the costal margin. It was about 3 centimeters long and 0.8 centimeter wide.

Figure 4-8 shows the trunk of a man (in Virginia) who had received multiple stab wounds, and Figure 4-9 shows a close-up of two of this man's wounds. The skin had retracted and left a lenticular opening from which underlying tissues tended to extrude.

Comment. Lûtfi's case, although unverified, derives some strength from his failure to fill the gaps of his memories with additional details. He did not do this even under the stimulus of our interest in his case. What he told us accorded

[17]Most of the flat birthmarks, that is, those that are not raised, depressed, or puckered, that this work describes and illustrates are hyperpigmented macules. They have increased pigment compared with the surrounding skin. However, in a smaller number of cases the birthmark has *less* pigment than the surrounding skin. Lûtfi's birthmarks are of this type. Those of Ijeoma Nwangu, Hanumant Saxena, Aristide Kolotey, and Ma Choe Hnin Htet provide other examples. The list of cases in Appendix C identifies this feature in the cases in which it occurs.

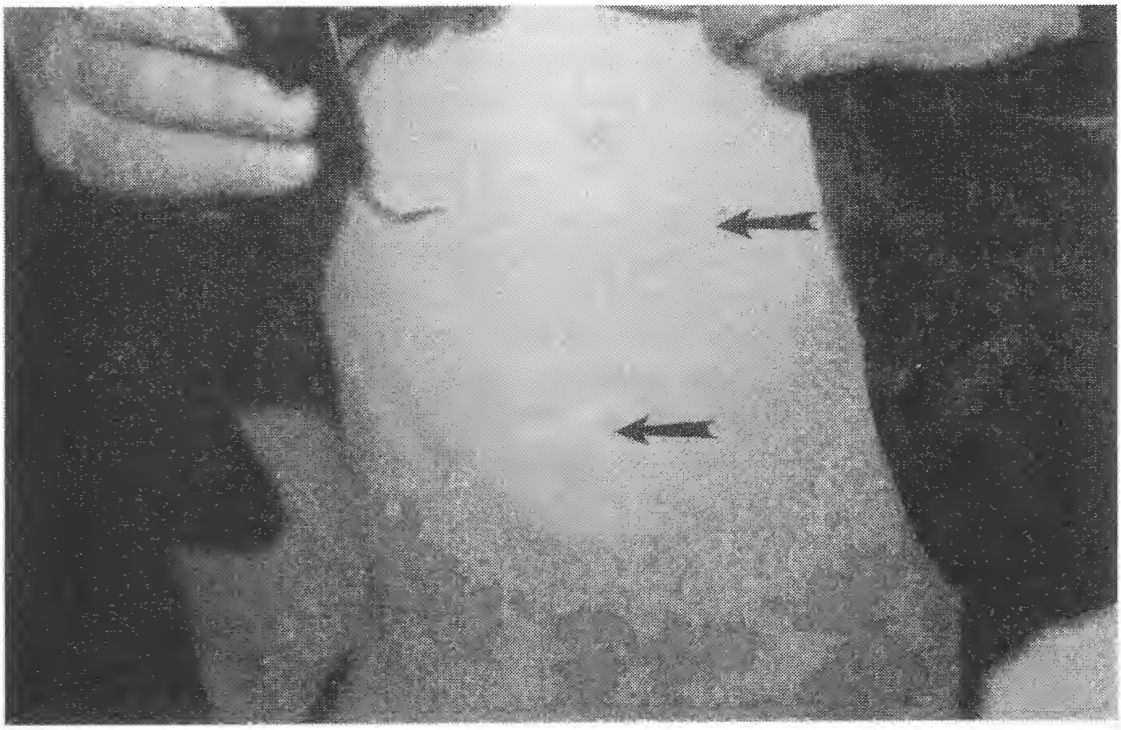

Figure 4-7 Birthmarks on chest of Lûtfi Sarıkaya as they appeared in March 1973, when he was about 11 years old. The birthmarks were areas of hypopigmentation. The smaller, less easily seen one was in the 5 o'clock position in relation to Lûtfi's right nipple.

well with what his mother said he had been saying about the previous life ever since he had been 6 years old.

Additional Information

Despite the fragmentary nature of Lûtfi's memories and lack of geographical precision in them, there seemed a slight possibility that if Lûtfi saw the village of the previous life, he would recognize it. Reşat Bayer encouraged Zeynep Sarıkaya to take Lûtfi to some of the villages between Havutlu and Karataş in the hope that he would be able to do this. She considered this project futile, but she might later have followed the suggestion anyway.

Reşat Bayer died in 1977. Afterward, Ertan Kura made a trip to south central Turkey on my behalf, and I asked him to try to meet Lûtfi and obtain any further information he could about the case. However, he learned (in 1981) that Lûtfi and his mother had moved away, and he could not trace them.

THE CASE OF DURAN İNCİRGÖZ

Duran İncirgöz was born in Karşıyaka, a suburb of Adana, Turkey, in 1934. I first met him in 1967, when he was 33 years old. He and his mother, Asiye İncirgöz, were the only informants for his case. They were Alevis.

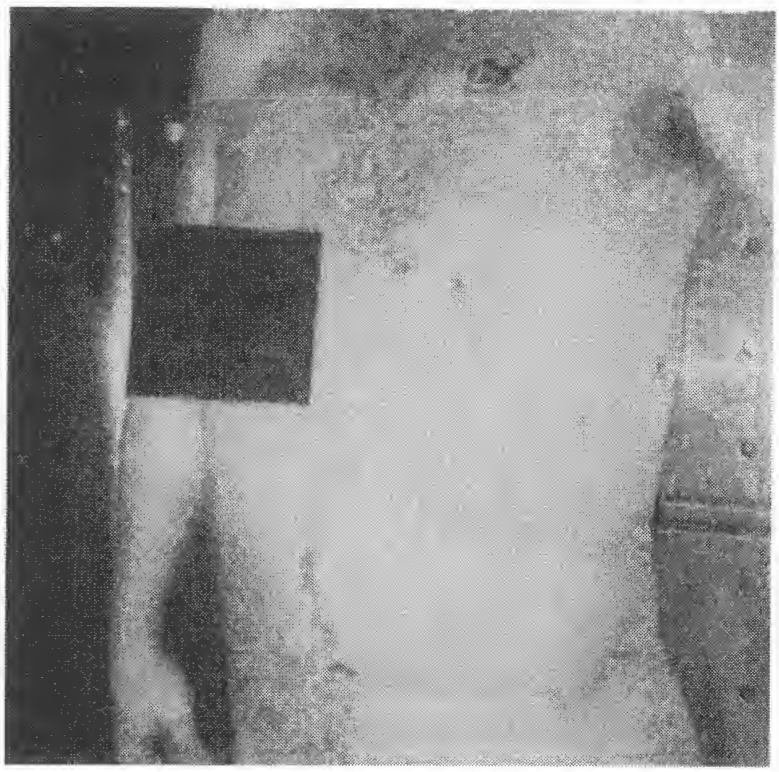

Figure 4-8 Trunk of a man murdered in Virginia showing multiple stab wounds. (Courtesy of Dr. David Wiecking.)

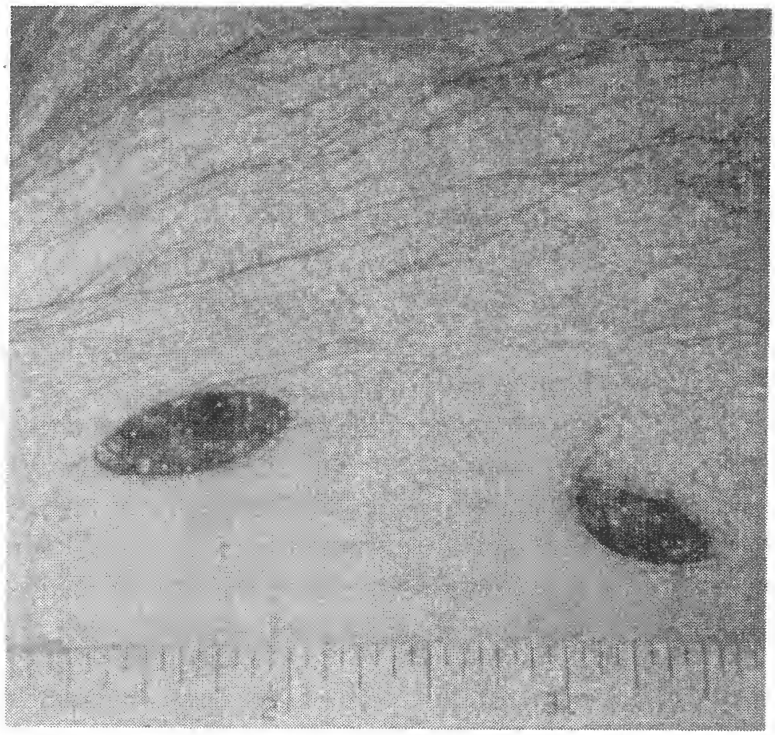

Figure 4-9 Two of the stab wounds on the chest of the same man (of Figure 4-8) showing the tendency for the wounds to gape. (Courtesy of Dr. David Wiecking.)

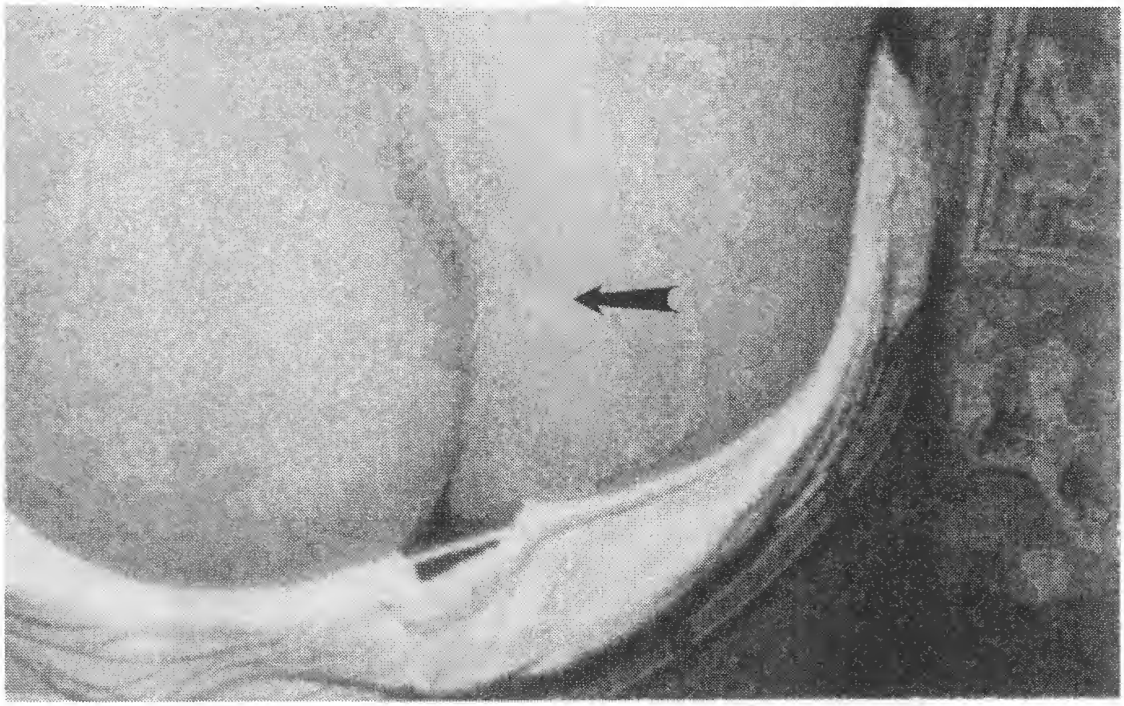

Figure 4-10 Birthmark on right buttock of Duran İncirgöz as it appeared in 1967, when he was 33 years old. The birthmark was then a roundish, slightly elevated, slightly puckered area about 3 centimeters in diameter. It had slightly diminished pigment compared with the surrounding skin.

In 1967 Duran İncirgöz showed Reşat Bayer and me a birthmark on his right buttock (Figure 4-10). He said that this derived from a pistol shot that had killed him in a previous life. Of other details about this life, he remembered only that he was young and that he had been shot in connection with a woman. He thought that this had happened in a brothel.

Duran's mother, Asiye İncirgöz, corroborated her son's statement about the cause of his death in the previous life. She said that when he had been about 5 or 6 years old, he went around telling everyone that he had been killed (in his previous life) on account of prostitutes whom he used to patronize.

Asiye İncirgöz also remembered (somewhat vaguely) that about 2 days before Duran's birth she had dreamed about a young man; but she could remember no other details of the dream or dreams that she had at that time.

She did, however, give additional details about Duran's birthmark. She said that when he was born his entire body appeared swollen and dark. He had a birthmark (that shown in Figure 4-10), which was "quite black." She bathed her baby, first in cold and then in hot water. After this treatment the birthmark began to bleed and ooze, which it continued to do for about 40 days, when it healed up.[18]

[18]Other subjects who were said to have had birthmarks that oozed, suppurated, or bled when they were born include: Som Pit Hancharoen, Cemil Fahrici, Sunita Khandelwal, Daw Aye Myint, Maung Aung Than, Necip Ünlütaşkıran, Ma Khin Ma Gyi, Tong In Songcham, Maung Chit Htun, Yusuf Güven, Wilfred Meares, Mahmut Ekici, Ali Uğurlu, Yahya Balcı, Linda Chijioke, and Maung Zaw Thein Lwin.

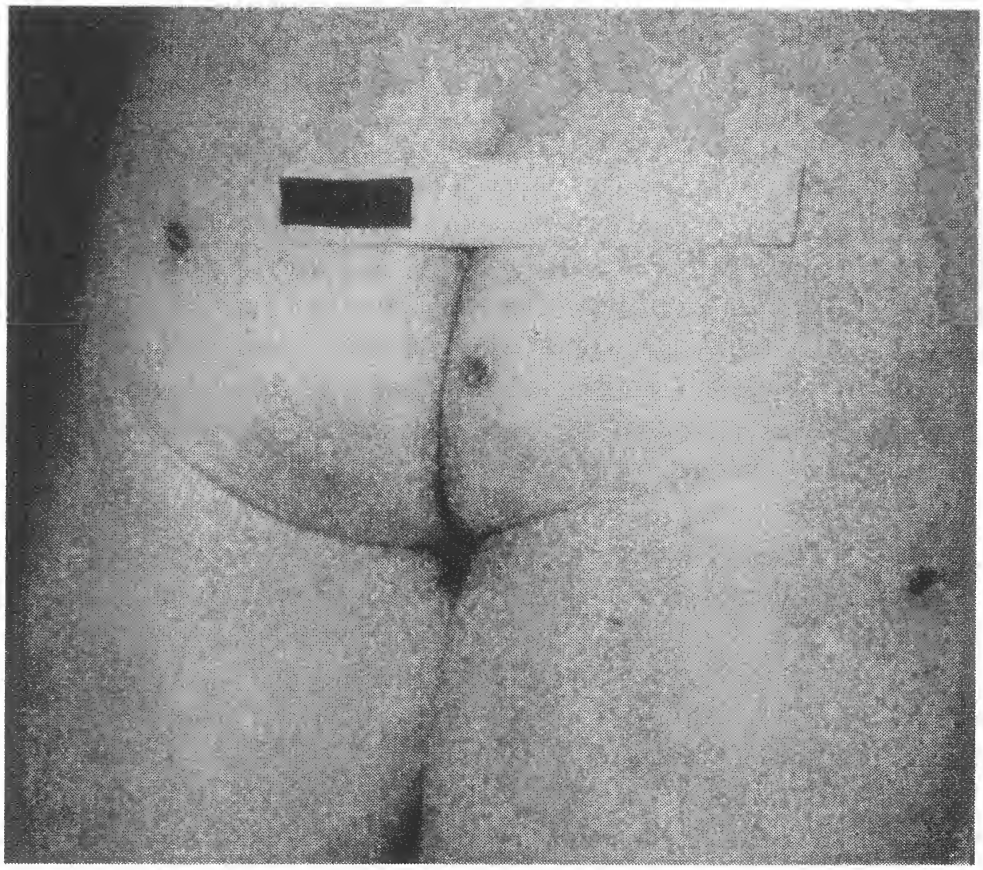

Figure 4-11 Bullet wounds of a man who was shot and killed in Virginia. One of the bullets struck the victim on the right buttock at almost the same site as that of the birthmark on Duran İncirgöz. (Courtesy of Dr. David Wiecking.)

Asiye İncirgöz could not remember knowing any young man whose history corresponded with the account Duran gave of the previous life he claimed to remember.

Duran said that he had a pronounced phobia of brothels and never went near them. But the previous personality's misadventure with women had not affected Duran's attitude toward *all* women. He was in fact extremely attracted by them and somewhat boastfully recounted his pursuits of them—but not in whorehouses.

Duran's Birthmark

Figure 4-10 does not show all the details of the birthmark fully. In 1967 it was somewhat round and about 3 centimeters in diameter. It was slightly elevated and resembled closely a puckered scar of an acquired wound. The skin of the birthmark was slightly paler than that of the surrounding skin. Readers should note that Figure 4-10 does not show the birthmark in its original appearance. It portrays rather the scar of a congenital wound that bled and oozed for some time after birth.

Figure 4-11 shows the back view of the buttocks of a man in Virginia who was shot in the buttocks. One of the bullets entered this man's body at almost the same site as the birthmark on Duran İncirgöz.

THE CASE OF HENRY ELKIN

Introduction

Henry Elkin's case was one of the first with birthmarks that I investigated, and I shall briefly describe how I first met him. In September 1962, on my second field trip to Alaska, Charles Porter (the subject of another case, also included in this work) advised me to go to Hoonah, where, he was sure, I would find more cases. Hoonah is one of a small number of relatively isolated fishing villages in southeastern Alaska that are entirely inhabited by the Tlingit and where the people have preserved their traditional religion better than have many of the Tlingit who live in the towns and cities of southeastern Alaska, such as Sitka, Juneau, and Ketchikan.

Charles Porter had not given me the name of any informant in Hoonah, so that when, on the morning of September 26, 1962, a seaplane left me there on the dock, I was unsure how I should proceed. For a few minutes I walked up and down on the dock in the drizzle, watching the scavenging ravens and trying to think of the right move to make. The seaplane was due to return for me within a few hours, and I felt constrained to find the cases quickly, if there were any. So I decided to ask the first person I met, and this turned out to be Henry Elkin, who came walking along the dock just as I had made up my mind to do this. I accosted him and briefly explained my reason for being in Hoonah. To my surprise and pleasure he opened the front of his shirt and showed me a birthmark on his left chest (Figure 4-12). He told me that he believed he had been shot in the chest during a previous life. Later, he took me to his home and showed me a larger birthmark on his left back. He allowed me to photograph both the birthmarks, and to photograph them again in 1972.

Henry Elkin was born in Angoon, Alaska, in 1899. In adulthood he moved to Hoonah. He worked as a fisherman and, so far as I know, had no other occupation.

Henry Elkin was the sole informant for his case. I met him again in 1972, and in the following year Betty Hulbert, who was then assisting me with investigations in Alaska, had another interview with him and obtained some additional information.

I have reported Henry Elkin's case elsewhere. Here I shall only summarize its main features; interested readers can find additional details in my earlier report (Stevenson, 1974b).

Statements Made by Henry Elkin

Henry Elkin said that he recalled two episodes from a previous life. The more important of these was a memory of his grandmother sitting in the community house at Angoon. In the days of warfare among the Tlingit tribes, the warriors' womenfolk would sit in the community house until the survivors among their absent men returned from a raid or battle. Tribal warfare among the Tlingits diminished and ceased between about 1855 and 1880.

Henry Elkin had a second memory of witnessing his father rescue two men who were drowning. (In 1972 he added a detail to his earlier account of his par-

ents' verification of the related episode, and this detail, not included in what he had earlier told me of the episode, made interpretation of this memory more difficult.)

He said that his parents confirmed the correctness of both his memories, but told him that the incidents had occurred before he was born. They firmly refused to discuss them with him and tried to suppress his references to the memories.

He did not have any memories of how he had died in the previous life; nor had his parents told him about the death of a person to whose life his memories might correspond.

Henry Elkin's Birthmarks

Henry Elkin said that his mother told him he was born with two birthmarks. The smaller of these (Figure 4-12) was located on the left chest about halfway between the nipple and the clavicle and about 6 centimeters superior to the nipple. It was generally round in shape. It was about 1.2 centimeters in diameter, slightly depressed below the surrounding skin, and puckered. Its center was slightly paler than that of the skin outside the birthmark, but the periphery of the birthmark was darker than the surrounding skin. Figure 4-13 shows a bullet wound of entry on a man murdered in Virginia.

The second birthmark (Figure 4-14) was on the left upper back about 15 centimeters from the top of the shoulder and about 8 centimeters from the midline. This mark was also generally round in shape, but more irregular in outline than the first one. It was about 1.5 centimeters long and 1 centimeter wide. It was also slightly depressed below the surrounding skin and puckered. Its pigmentation did not differ significantly from that of the surrounding skin.

Henry Elkin also had another mark on his right back (indistinctly visible at the right margin of Figure 4-14). It was smaller than the one on his left back, but otherwise somewhat similar in appearance. He said that this mark was the scar of a furuncle that he had had after birth.

Figure 4-15 shows the bullet wound of exit on the man killed in Virginia whose wound of entry is shown in Figure 4-13. The distinctly round shape of the entry wound and the somewhat irregular shape and larger size of the exit wound are characteristic of the two types of wounds.[19]

Comment

Many Tlingit people believe that children who remember previous lives will die young, and this may lead in some instances to suppression of cases, or at least to

[19]Several other subjects of cases in this work, including Chanai Choomalaiwong and Maung Tin Win, have had small round birthmarks and larger, irregular birthmarks corresponding to wounds of entry and exit. Readers should compare the figures of their birthmarks with those of Henry Elkin's birthmarks. They should also refer back to my comments on gunshot wounds of entry and exit at the end of the report of the case of Maung Sein Win. In Chapter 12 I discuss the significance of birthmarks corresponding to bullet wounds of entry and exit.

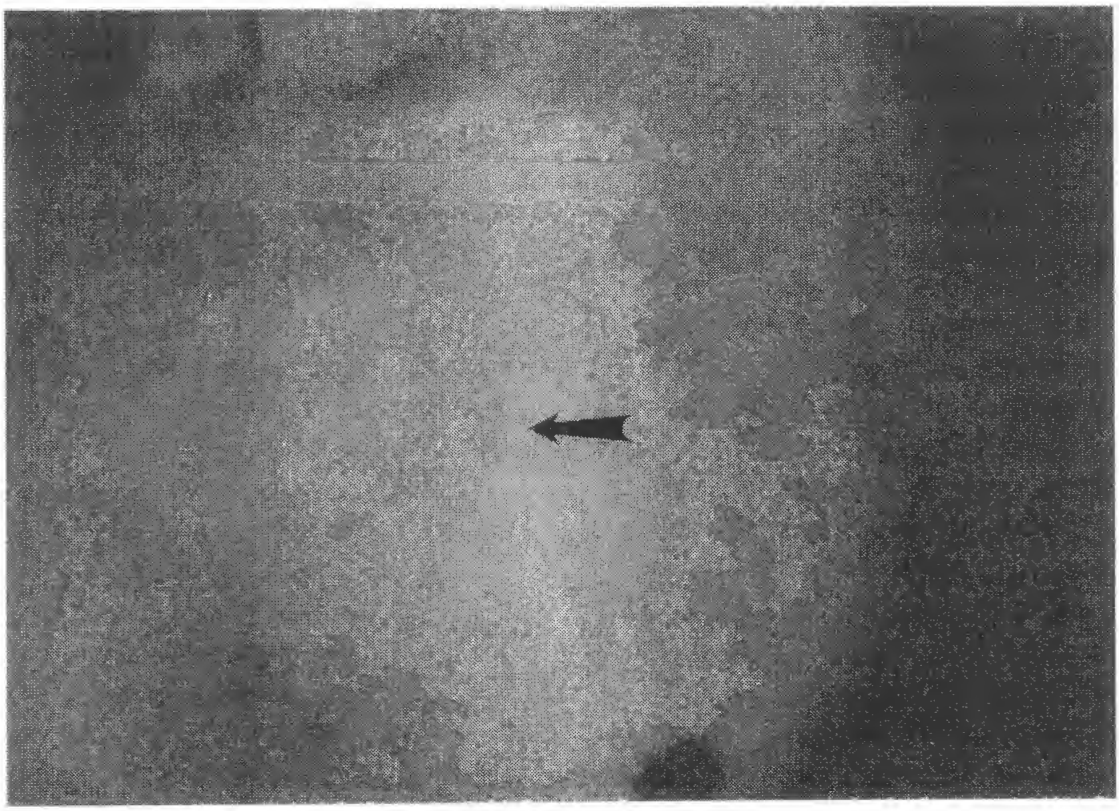

Figure 4-12 Birthmark on upper left chest of Henry Elkin as it appeared in 1972, when he was 73 years old. The birthmark was generally round in shape and about 1.2 centimeters in diameter. It was slightly depressed below the surrounding skin and puckered. The center had slightly less pigment than the surrounding skin and the margins slightly more. This birthmark presumably corresponded to a bullet wound of entry.

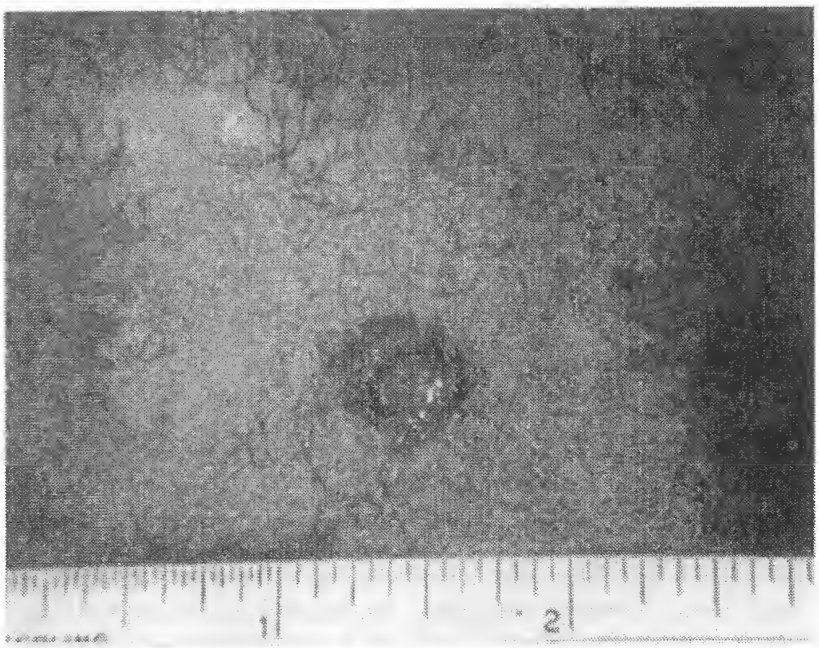

Figure 4-13 Bullet wound of entry on the chest of a man murdered in Virginia. The wound was round and about 7 millimeters in diameter. Note the rim of abraded skin around the entrance hole. (Courtesy of Dr. David Wiecking.)

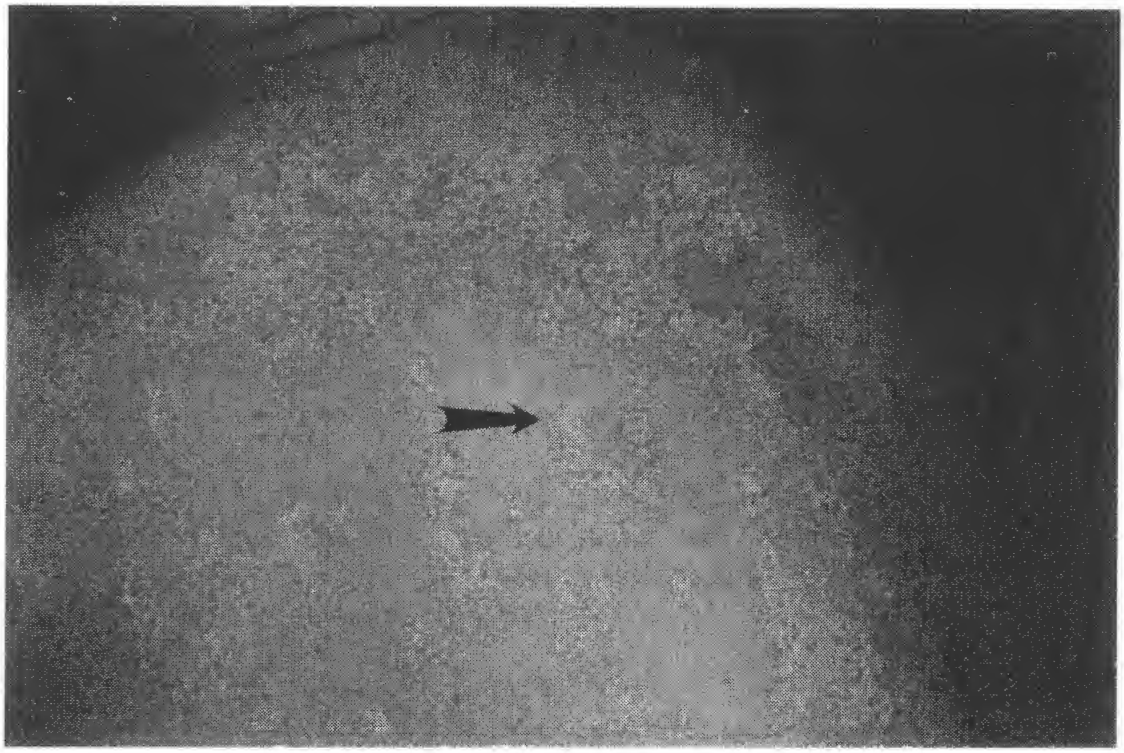

Figure 4-14 Birthmark on the left upper back of Henry Elkin photographed at the same time as Figure 4-12. This birthmark was generally round, but more irregular than that on the front of the chest. It was about 1.5 centimeters long and 1 centimeter wide. Like the other birthmark it was slightly depressed below the surrounding skin and puckered. It presumably corresponded to a wound of exit.

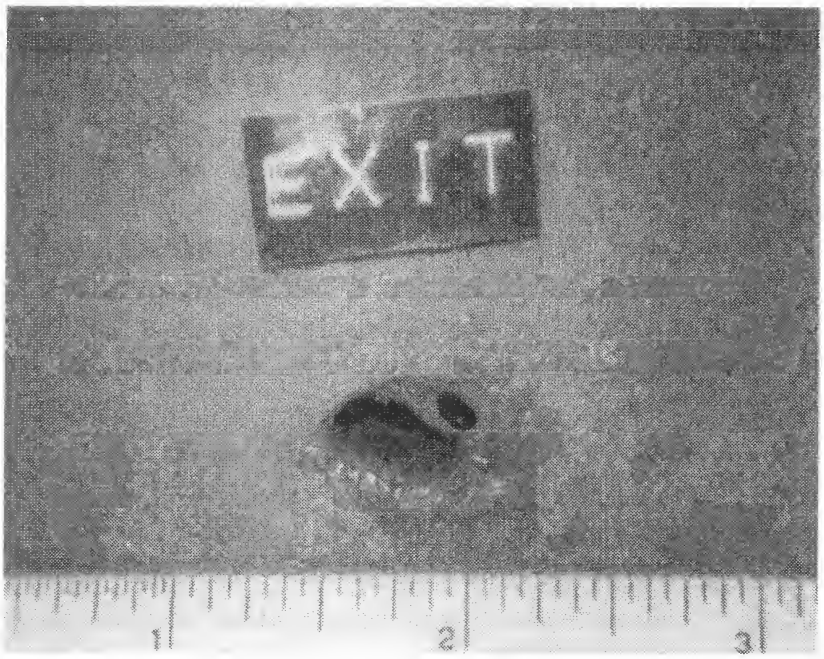

Figure 4-15 The wound of exit on the back made by the bullet that made the wound of entry shown in Figure 4-13. This wound was more irregular in shape; it was about 1.2 centimeters wide, appreciably larger than that shown in Figure 4-13. (Courtesy of Dr. David Wiecking.)

efforts at inhibiting a child with apparent memories from talking about them. Henry Elkin gave me the impression that his parents may have had more personal reasons for suppressing his case. The Tlingit people of his and his parents' generations attached much importance to identifying every baby as a particular deceased person reborn. They did this by means of paying attention to announcing dreams and by examining the newborn baby for birthmarks that corresponded to wounds or other marks, such as nevi, on a deceased person they had known. Once a baby had been identified in this way, his parents might even give him the deceased person's tribal name. If the child later communicated imaged memories of a previous life or showed behavior resembling that of the person he was thought to have been, these signs could be regarded as welcome and interesting, but on the whole unnecessary additions to the earlier evidence from dreams and birthmarks. Accordingly, it seems unlikely that Henry Elkin's parents had not identified him as being the reincarnation of someone they had known. That they chose not to tell him this or to let him discuss his memories of the previous life suggests that the life ended in the climax to a private feud the animosities of which Henry Elkin's parents did not wish to rekindle.

THE CASE OF MAUNG AYE KYAW

Summary of the Case and Its Investigation

Maung Aye Kyaw was born in the village of U-yin-ywa near the town of Tada-U in Upper Burma on May 18, 1952. His parents were U Ohn Khin and Daw Yee, and he was the fourth of their five children. Maung Aye Kyaw was born with a large birthmark on the left side of his head in the parietal area (Figure 4-16).

When Maung Aye Kyaw was about 3 or 4 years old, he met an old vegetable seller, Daw Lay, who came to his village. When he learned that Daw Lay was from Tada-U town, he said to her: "I want to go with you to Tada-U." Daw Lay asked him why he wanted to go there, and he said: "Because I have my father and mother there." She asked who his parents were, and he replied: "U Toke and Daw Aye Sein. I am Maung Shwe."

Daw Lay retold these remarks in Tada-U, and they eventually reached Maung Aung Khin, the younger brother of a man, Maung Shwe, who had been killed some years before near Tada-U. Maung Aung Khin went to U-yin-ywa village, where Maung Aye Kyaw recognized him and ran to embrace him. Maung Aung Khin then interrogated Maung Aye Kyaw about Maung Shwe and his family and received satisfactory answers to his questions.

Some time later—I do not know exactly how much later—Maung Aye Kyaw was taken to Tada-U, where he recognized Maung Shwe's mother, Daw Aye Sein.

Thereafter, Maung Aye Kyaw gave out more details of the previous life he remembered. He said that he had been shot in the head. He recalled that in the previous life he had been married to Ma Hla Myine. Much later, Ma Hla Myine, who had in the meantime married again, came to Tada-U to attend a wedding. She

had heard of Maung Aye Kyaw and wanted to meet him. He recognized her in a group of persons, embraced her, and wept joyfully. By this time Maung Aye Kyaw was (probably) 6 or 7 years old.

In the subsequent years while Maung Aye Kyaw was growing up, he continued to hold fond memories of Ma Hla Myine and to obtain news of her. He learned that her second husband, a soldier, had been killed fighting, and that Ma Hla Myine had then moved to Nga-Zun, another town of the area.

Maung Aye Kyaw completed primary school education and then opened a shop as a hairdresser. At about this time—he was 18 years old then—he enquired about Ma Hla Myine from some persons of Nga-Zun who had come for trading to Tada-U. Maung Aye Kyaw sent his photograph with them to Ma Hla Myine, and, not long afterward, he went himself to Nga-Zun, found her, and married her.

This case first came to the attention of U Win Maung in September 1972. At that time he was in Nga-Zun and took down a long statement about the case from Maung Aye Kyaw and his wife, Ma Hla Myine.

In November 1972, U Win Maung and I went together to Nga-Zun, where we interviewed Maung Aye Kyaw and Ma Hla Myine. Since Ma Hla Myine was the widow of Maung Shwe (as well as the wife of Maung Aye Kyaw), she could tell us something about Maung Shwe's life and death.

However, I thought that we should try to obtain additional information from other informants about Maung Shwe and that we should also try to meet informants who could tell us about Maung Aye Kyaw's early life. Accordingly, in March 1977, U Win Maung and I returned to the area. In Tada-U we interviewed Maung Shwe's mother, Daw Aye Sein, and some other members of his family. We also met Maung Aye Kyaw's older brother, U Ba Thoung. Maung Aye Kyaw's father had died; his mother was still living, but in her village of U-yin-ywa, which—given the exigencies of our journey—was inaccessible to us. We also did not meet Daw Lay, who had been the first person to tell people in Tada-U about Maung Aye Kyaw's statements and claim to be Maung Shwe reborn. (She was away from Tada-U on the day when we were there.)

We went to the village of Gaung-gwe, near which Maung Aye Kyaw said Maung Shwe had been killed. We hoped to find there some older person having reliable information about Maung Shwe's death; but we were unable to do so.

In March 1977, we also had further interviews with Maung Aye Kyaw and Ma Hla Myine in Nga-Zun.

Persons Interviewed during the Investigation

In Nga-Zun we interviewed:

Maung Aye Kyaw

Ma Hla Myine, Maung Shwe's widow and Maung Aye Kyaw's wife

In Tada-U we interviewed:

Daw Aye Sein, Maung Shwe's mother

Maung Aung Khin, Maung Shwe's younger brother
U Ba Aye, Maung Shwe's maternal uncle; retired police officer
U Ba Thoung, Maung Aye Kyaw's older brother
Daw Sint, elderly resident of the town

In Gaung-gwe village we interviewed:
U Thoung Nyunt, village headman

After the Burmese Government had repressed the Communist insurgency of the late 1940s and the 1950s, many Communists returned to their communities and resumed a peaceful life. They tried to conceal and forget their past, and other villagers were often willing not to ask them penetrating questions. In time, old animosities became forgotten or at least set aside. This probably explains why U Thoung Nyunt seemed reluctant to facilitate our meeting older informants in Gaung-gwe who would have remembered something about the death of Maung Shwe. (He himself had been only about 12 years old at the time.) In addition, Maung Shwe's murderers were still alive and living in the area at the time of our investigation of the case; this fact alone explains the vagueness and reticence of some informants about Maung Shwe's murder.

Relevant Facts of Geography and Possibilities for Normal Means of Communication between the Two Families

All the places figuring in this case are in Upper Burma west of Mandalay. Nga-Zun is a moderately large town on the Irrawaddy River about 48 kilometers west of Mandalay. Tada-U is a smaller town about 32 kilometers southeast of Nga-Zun and 24 kilometers southwest of Mandalay. It is on the Myitnge River, a tributary of the Irrawaddy. U-yin-ywa is a village on the Irrawaddy River about 3 kilometers from Tada-U.

Maung Shwe was (probably) killed at a village called Gaung-gwe, which is about halfway between Tada-U and U-yin-ywa village.

There was some commercial contact between Tada-U and Nga-Zun, but this could not have been extensive. Although the two towns were only 32 kilometers apart as the crow flies, journeys between them were arduous. Traveling along a direct route by cart tracks in a bullock-cart would take half a day; and traveling along better roads by bus involved crossing two rivers by ferry.

U-yin-ywa was much closer and more accessible to Tada-U, and I have already mentioned that Daw Lay had come from Tada-U to sell vegetables in U-yin-ywa on the occasion when Maung Aye Kyaw asked her to take him back to Tada-U with her.

Ma Hla Myine said that she had no acquaintance with Maung Aye Kyaw's family before she first met him when he was (probably) 6 or 7 years old. Maung Shwe's mother, Daw Aye Sein, also said that the families were complete strangers to each other before she first met Maung Aye Kyaw.

U Ba Thoung was 10 years older than Maung Aye Kyaw. He was the only other member of Maung Aye Kyaw's family whom we interviewed. He said that

he had never known Maung Shwe, although he vaguely remembered hearing about Maung Shwe's death.

The Life and Death of Maung Shwe

Maung Shwe was born in Tada-U in about 1931. His parents were U Toke and Daw Aye Sein, and they had several other children. We interviewed one of these, Maung Shwe's younger brother, Maung Aung Khin.

When Maung Shwe was about 18, he married Ma Hla Myine, a girl of about 16, who was then living in Gaung-gwe, near Tada-U.

Maung Shwe joined the police force during the period of Communist insurgency in Burma that followed Burma's independence from Great Britain. (See Appendix B.)

No living informant we met could tell exactly how Maung Shwe died. We obtained considerable secondhand information, but the person most knowledgeable among those with whom we talked was undoubtedly U Ba Aye, Maung Shwe's maternal uncle. U Ba Aye had been a corporal in the police, and Maung Shwe, who was a constable, was working under him at the time of his death.

U Ba Aye said that "there were insurgents all around Tada-U between 1949 and 1951. Tada-U fell to the Communists in 1952, and Maung Shwe had died by that time." The police were guarding the principal strategic points, such as bridges. On the day of Maung Shwe's disappearance he and another constable were on duty near a bridge across the Panthay Creek on the outskirts of Tada-U. U Ba Aye was in charge of the section to which Maung Shwe belonged, and when he made a round of inspection during the night, he found Maung Shwe missing. Maung Shwe's partner on guard duty was vague about Maung Shwe's absence. U Ba Aye reported his disappearance to his superiors.

Early the next morning U Ba Aye heard a rumor that Maung Shwe had been killed. Then he learned that a body was floating in the Seik-kyipauk lake. (This was an area flooded during the rainy season, not a regular lake.) He was getting ready to go to look at the body when he learned that it had been pushed off and floated away.

Other persons also gave an alarm about Maung Shwe's disappearance. He had been due to participate in a religious ceremony in which his younger brother, Maung Aung Khin, also had a part (as a musician); and when Maung Shwe did not attend the ceremony, others began to search for him.

Maung Shwe's young wife, Ma Hla Myine, also reported his disappearance. After some days, Ma Hla Myine heard that her husband had been killed, and she held the usual Buddhist ceremony, *paritta*, for him.[20] Ma Hla Myine later learned

[20]The paritta ceremony is a ritual that includes the chanting of Buddhist texts. It may be used for warding off unwelcome discarnate personalities and also, as in this instance, for assisting discarnate personalities either to pass out of the immediate postmortem realm and reach a higher plane of existence or to become satisfactorily reborn in a human body. I have given further information (with additional references) about the paritta ceremony elsewhere (Stevenson, 1983a).

The paritta ceremony also figures in the cases of the Ven. U Sobhana and Sivanthie Hettiaratchi.

that on the night Maung Shwe disappeared a monk at the monastery of Gaung-gwe, near the Seik-kyipauk lake, heard a commotion with sounds as if a man was being beaten and crying for mercy; then the monk heard a gunshot. The monk was too afraid to go out of the monastery to see what had happened, but told some other monks about what he had heard, and from them this information reached Ma Hla Myine. (She herself did not talk with the monk.)

About 5 days after Maung Shwe's disappearance his family learned that a body had been caught in bushes by the bank of a creek at U-yin-ywa village. (The flood waters of the Seik-kyipauk lake drained into the Irrawaddy River near U-yin-ywa, and presumably the body seen there was the one previously reported to have been floating in the lake.) Later—probably much later—Maung Aung Khin heard that Maung Aye Kyaw's mother had pushed the body away from the shore. Ma Hla Myine also heard that "fishermen" had hooked the decomposed body of a man in uniform, which they pushed back into the water. They assumed it was that of Maung Shwe.

U Ba Aye described his nephew as having been a quiet person and a brave one. He was unaggressive toward others, but also unafraid. In matters of religion Maung Shwe was average. However, he had been a prime mover in a group presentation of images of the Buddha to the pagoda at Tada-U. Each policeman of the local force had responsibility for paying for one image. (U Win Maung and I visited the pagoda and saw the Buddha's image with Maung Shwe's name on it.) The ceremony of the presentation was to have taken place the day following that on which Maung Shwe disappeared.

Following Maung Shwe's disappearance, Ma Hla Myine felt intuitively that he would somehow come back to her, perhaps through being reborn in a new body. She moved to Nga-Zun, where she had been born and had lived in early childhood. She was reluctant to marry again, but finally did so at the urging of her parents. Her second husband was a soldier in the Burmese Army, and he also was subsequently killed while fighting insurgents.

Comment. Several factors worked against a proper search for Maung Shwe's body and an effort to identify the body that was observed floating on the Seik-kyipauk lake and at the creek by U-yin-ywa village. First, the area was infested with insurgents who impeded ordinary movements of the inhabitants. Second, the murder occurred during a period of flooding that also made traveling difficult. Third, the Burmese villagers are reluctant to allow into a village the body of a person who has died violently. It would be assumed that a person whose body was floating in water had either drowned or been killed and the body thrown into the water—both violent modes of death.

The sum of our enquiries amounted to some circumstantial evidence indicating that Maung Shwe had been captured by Communist insurgents, shot, and thrown into a stream or body of water that ultimately carried it toward the Irrawaddy River near U-yin-ywa village. However, we have not verified Maung Aye Kyaw's statement that he was shot in the head.

The Date of Maung Shwe's Death. In 1972 Ma Hla Myine gave the date of Maung Shwe's death (strictly, the date of his disappearance) in the Burmese Calendar,

which converted to the Western Calendar as July 3. She said that the year was "about 20 years ago," which would have put the death in 1952. However, U Ba Aye was positive that Maung Shwe died in 1951, before Tada-U fell to the Communists. The month of July seems correct, because all the informants agreed that it was the season of floods (related to the monsoon rains), and so the month was either July, August, or September. We have concluded, therefore, that Maung Shwe died on July 3, 1951.

Estimates of Maung Shwe's age at death ranged between 18 and 22. A reasonable compromise would be 20, which is why I have suggested that he was born in 1931.

Statements and Recognitions Made by Maung Aye Kyaw

Maung Aye Kyaw was 20 when we began to investigate his case. Informants credited him with having made numerous statements about the previous life when he was a young child. Unfortunately, they had largely forgotten them or gave only secondhand reports of his statements. For example, Maung Aye Kyaw and Ma Hla Myine told us that when he had spoken to Daw Lay he had told her the names of Maung Shwe's parents: U Toke and Daw Aye Sein. However, as I explained, we were unable to meet Daw Lay. (Thus the information in the second paragraph of this report is secondhand.) Similarly, Maung Aye Kyaw remembered having stated when young not only the name of Maung Shwe's wife (Ma Hla Myine) but also her village (Gaung-gwe). He had mentioned also, he said, that they had two children. (In fact, they had one live child, and Ma Hla Myine was pregnant with their second baby when Maung Shwe was killed.) We did not find a firsthand corroborating informant for these statements either.

In Table 4-1 I have listed all Maung Aye Kyaw's statements and recognitions (as a young child) for which we obtained a firsthand informant.

Two of the recognitions (items 8 and 10 of Table 4-1) occurred in response to questions that could have been and probably were accompanied by glances or other signals that might have guided Maung Aye Kyaw. (My lack of confidence in most of the recognitions reported for these cases derives from incidents like these.) However, Maung Aye Kyaw's recognition (item 6) of Maung Shwe's brother, Maung Aung Khin, appears to have occurred unexpectedly and spontaneously.

Maung Aye Kyaw's Memories in 1972 of Maung Shwe's Death. Unlike most subjects of these cases Maung Aye Kyaw said that his memories had not faded and that he still remembered in the 1970s what he had remembered of the previous life as a young child. Although his statements about Maung Shwe's death are unverified in details, I think it helpful to give here the statement about this that U Win Maung recorded from him in 1972:

> ...on the night he was murdered he was patrolling the Panthay Bridge with another policeman....While his fellow patrolman was away on some errand, three or four persons with whom he had some acquaintance approached him and asked him if he would help them catch some dacoits who were alleged to

be molesting the village of Gaung-gwe. Believing them, he shouldered his carbine and followed them.

When they were crossing the shallow stream of Seik-kyipauk, about half a mile from the bridge, the man behind him stabbed him on the nape [of the neck]. They thought that he was dead, but he had only lost consciousness. He was dragged half alive to the place of patrol. When they reached the bridge, he regained consciousness and groaned. Thereupon, one of the murderers took his carbine and shot him in the head. Just before he died—as the murderer was taking aim—he concentrated on the meritorious deed of donating an image of the Lord Buddha to the village pagoda.

In addition to the foregoing, Maung Aye Kyaw said that he remembered the names of two of Maung Shwe's murderers: Tun Aung, who had stabbed him in the neck, and Myat U, who had shot him in the head.

Comment. If Maung Shwe thought as he was dying about the meritorious deed of donating an image of the Buddha to the local pagoda, his action accorded with the belief of Buddhists that the last thoughts before dying influence one's next birth—whether in a discarnate realm or in a new physical body. The act of donating the image was itself meritorious and thinking about it at the time of death additionally beneficial.

Maung Aye Kyaw's Statements about Events after Maung Shwe's Death. Maung Aye Kyaw said that Maung Shwe's murderers threw his body into the water, and it was carried downstream. He (as a discarnate personality) followed the body. Early the following morning, Daw Yee (Maung Aye Kyaw's mother) was fetching water from the stream, when she saw the body floating in the water. She screamed, and her brothers, who heard her, came and pushed the body back into the stream.[21]

The discarnate Maung Shwe clung to the skirt of Daw Yee. As she returned to her village, other discarnate personalities (conceived as guarding the village) tried to stop him, but he somehow forced his way in.

Maung Aye Kyaw believed that he existed as a discarnate personality for only one night.

Comment. Maung Aye Kyaw's statements about the events after Maung Shwe's death show a distorted sense of the passage of terrestrial time that frequently occurs in subjects' statements about experiences after death. If we have the correct

[21]We obtained only secondhand information concerning a body that was pushed back into the water at U-yin-ywa a day or more after Maung Shwe's disappearance. We did not interview Daw Yee, who was probably the only living person who could have verified Maung Aye Kyaw's account of how villagers had pushed a body back into the stream soon before she became pregnant.

However, if we assume the accuracy of Maung Aye Kyaw's account, the present case is one of several cases (some others included in this work) in which the mother of a subject had had close contact with the body of the previous personality shortly before becoming pregnant with the subject.

Other examples occurred in the cases of Yusuf Köse, Maung Win Aye, Mahmut Ekici, Hanumant Saxena, Bhopal Singh, and Ma Hmwe Lone.

dates for Maung Shwe's death and Maung Aye Kyaw's birth, the interval between them was 10½ months. Allowing for 9 months of pregnancy, during which Buddhists conceive the reincarnating personality as attached to the embryonic physical body of its next terrestrial life, there would still have been 1½ months, instead of only a day, when Maung Shwe would have had no physical body and therefore could be properly regarded by Buddhists as in a discarnate state.

Maung Aye Kyaw's Behavior Related to the Previous Life

Maung Aye Kyaw's Attitude of Vengefulness toward Maung Shwe's Murderers. As a young child Maung Aye Kyaw talked of revenging himself on Maung Shwe's murderers, two of whom, as I have mentioned, he named. Daw Aye Sein said that she heard, even before she had first met Maung Aye Kyaw, that he had been making threatening statements about Maung Shwe's murderers. Maung Aye Kyaw himself told U Win Maung that he remembered that once when he saw one of the murderers he tried to throw stones at him.[22]

Later Maung Aye Kyaw modified his attitude, and by 1972 he was able to say "let them live."

Maung Aye Kyaw's Longing for Maung Shwe's Parents. I have already mentioned the (secondhand) testimony about how Maung Aye Kyaw asked Daw Lay to take him to Tada-U when she returned there. Daw Aye Sein told us that when she first tried to meet Maung Aye Kyaw, she sent two men with a message to his mother asking her to let Maung Aye Kyaw come to meet her. However, his mother did not wish him to meet her that day; but she promised to arrange a meeting for the following day. Maung Aye Kyaw, eager to meet Daw Aye Sein immediately, slipped away from his family and tried to follow Daw Aye Sein's messengers as they returned to Tada-U. The little boy took a shortcut and fell into a bog from which he had to be pulled out. Later, after Maung Aye Kyaw met Daw Aye Sein (at Tada-U), he stayed with her for 5 nights and slept "with mother," that is, with Daw Aye Sein. When he was a little older—between the ages of 7 and 8—he stayed with Daw Aye Sein for a month or more at a time. In the 1970s he still had much affection for her.

Maung Aye Kyaw's Strong Attachment to Ma Hla Myine. After Maung Aye Kyaw met Ma Hla Myine, when he was about 6 or 7 years old, he often implored his parents to let him go to Nga-Zun, where she was then living. However, they refused. It was not feasible for him to go to Nga-Zun by himself, but he continued to think about Ma Hla Myine. (She also seems to have thought about him fondly following their first meeting.)

[22]Other subjects—among many—who expressed thoughts of revenging themselves against the previous personality's murderers include: Tali Sowaid, Ali Uğurlu, Thiang San Kla, Semih Tutuşmuş, Süleyman Çapar, Nirankar Bhatnagar, Cemil Fahrici, Mehmet Samioğlu, Metin Köybaşı, Chanai Choomalaiwong, Maung Tin Win, Maung Aung Than (all in this work), Salem Andary, Bongkuch Promsin, and Ramoo and Rajoo Sharma.

Table 4-1 **Summary of Statements and Recognitions Made by Maung Aye Kyaw**

Item	*Informants*	*Verification*	*Comments*
1. His name was Maung Shwe.	U Ba Thoung, Maung Aye Kyaw's older brother	Daw Aye Sein, Maung Shwe's mother	
2. His wife was Ma Hla Myine.	U Ba Thoung	Ma Hla Myine, Maung Shwe's widow	
3. He was from Tada-U.	U Ba Thoung	Daw Aye Sein	
4. He was killed near the Seik-kyipauk Creek.	U Ba Thoung	Unverified, but probably correct	The Seik-kyipauk Creek and the Panthay Creek join near Gaung-gwe village, the putative site of Maung Shwe's murder. The enlarged stream flows (during the flood season) into the Seik-kyipauk lake, which in turn empties into the Irrawaddy River.
5. He was shot in the head.	U Ba Thoung	Unverified	U Ba Thoung remembered this item only after being asked a leading question.
6. Recognition of Maung Shwe's younger brother, Maung Aung Khin	Maung Aung Khin, Maung Shwe's younger brother		This occurred when Maung Aye Kyaw was about 4 years old. Daw Lay's report of what Maung Aye Kyaw had been saying stimulated Maung Aung Khin to visit U-yin-ywa. Maung Aung Khin went to U-yin-ywa village to meet Maung Aye Kyaw and found him

			alone in his family's house. Maung Aye Kyaw addressed him familiarly as "Aung Khin" without an honorific, as a brother might. Maung Aye Kyaw asked Maung Aung Khin why his mother had not come with him.
7. He had not attended the religious ceremony that had been planned.	Maung Aung Khin	Maung Aung Khin	Maung Aye Kyaw made this statement at the time of his first meeting with Maung Aung Khin. He spoke with regret, saying: "I have not completed what is to be done." This referred to the ceremony for the formal presentation of images of the Buddha to the Tada-U pagoda. (See text for further details.)
8. Recognition of Daw Aye Sein, Maung Shwe's mother	Daw Aye Sein		This item occurred at Tada-U. When Maung Aye Kyaw arrived at the house of Maung Shwe's parents, Daw Aye Sein and her sister were away at the pagoda. When they returned, Daw Aye Sein's sister entered the house in front of Daw Aye Sein. Someone present asked Maung Aye Kyaw: "Which one of them is your mother?" Maung Aye Kyaw replied: "The one behind is my mother."

Note: In this and similar tables, the *Informants* column lists the witnesses of what the subject did or said related to the previous life. The *Verification* column lists the informants for information verifying the accuracy of what the subject did or said with regard to the previous personality. In citing recognitions, I have usually left the *Verification* column blank, since the person who was the informant for the recognition (nearly always himself a witness of this recognition) either knew that the recognition was correct at the time it occurred or later verified its accuracy. Whenever possible, I have asked a person who was recognized by the subject about the details of the recognition, including circumstances, other persons present, and whether there were leading questions put or simply requests to name the person to be recognized. I have included information on these matters under *Comments,* in the right-hand column. This column also contains some other information or explanatory material. Unless specifically noted to the contrary, the statements and recognitions made by the subject were verified as being correct or appropriate for the previous personality.

Table 4-1 *(continued)*

Item	*Informants*	*Verification*	*Comments*
9. Recognition of fruit trees that Maung Shwe had planted	Daw Aye Sein		This item occurred during one of Maung Aye Kyaw's visits to Tada-U, probably his first. Maung Aye Kyaw was able to distinguish the fruit trees Maung Shwe had planted from others nearby that he had not planted.
10. Recognition of Ma Hla Myine, Maung Shwe's wife	Ma Hla Myine, Maung Shwe's wife		This recognition occurred 2 or 3 years after the previous ones. Ma Hla Myine was living in Nga-Zun and only found occasion to go to Tada-U when invited to a wedding there. After the wedding she went to Maung Aye Kyaw's village with a group of other guests from Nga-Zun. Maung Aye Kyaw was not at home when Ma Hla Myine arrived. When he returned, someone said to him: "Now boy. Pick out your wife from this crowd." Maung Aye Kyaw ran to Ma Hla Myine, embraced her, and wept. On different occasions Ma Hla Myine made discrepant statements about Maung Aye Kyaw's age when she first met him.

When Maung Aye Kyaw was about 18 years old (as I mentioned earlier), he happened to meet some vendors from Nga-Zun. Upon learning that they had some acquaintance with Ma Hla Myine, he asked them to take her his photograph. The persons of whom he asked this favor teased him and affected surprise that he would want to send his photograph to a widow instead of to a young girl; however, Maung Aye Kyaw told them the story of his previous life, and they consented to carry his photograph, even inviting him to visit them at Nga-Zun. Soon afterward he was able to go to Nga-Zun himself, and he found Ma Hla Myine there. Her second husband had been killed at the front, and she was again free; so they married.

Maung Aye Kyaw and Ma Hla Myine had already been married for a year or two by the time we first met them in 1972. I suppose, therefore, that when they had married, Maung Aye Kyaw had been about 19 years old and Ma Hla Myine, who had been 2 years younger than Maung Shwe, would have been about 39 years old. She was still able and eager to bear children and had at least one and possibly two during the years we knew her.

Comment. This is the only case I know in which a woman has borne children by two husbands in which the later husband has said that he was the reincarnation of the earlier one. Opinions may differ about the strength of the evidence in this case, but since Ma Hla Myine believed she was marrying in Maung Aye Kyaw the reincarnation of Maung Shwe, I find the case a moving illustration of the durability of marital devotion.

I have included Figures 4-18 and 4-19 to show this unusual couple and also to give readers an illustration of a typical interview for these cases.

Maung Aye Kyaw's Birthmark

Figure 4-16 shows the location, size, and appearance of Maung Aye Kyaw's birthmark. It was hairless and puckered, having the appearance of a healed scar. Its center was slightly depressed. It was somewhat elongated and more oval than round in form. It was about 3 centimeters long and 1 centimeter wide. Maung Aye Kyaw said that it did not bleed or suppurate at the time of his birth. He had never had any pain in its region or any headaches.

Figure 4-17 shows a bullet wound of entry in the skull of a man murdered in Virginia.

Maung Aye Kyaw said that he had no birthmark at the nape of his neck. (This site corresponds to the place where Maung Shwe, according to Maung Aye Kyaw's memories, was stabbed with a knife by one of his murderers when they first attacked him.) I examined Maung Aye Kyaw's neck in 1972 and found no birthmark there.

A Suggestion of Another Origin of Maung Aye Kyaw's Birthmark. In 1977 Daw Aye Sein mentioned that Maung Shwe at the age of about 2 had injured his head when he fell onto a stone pestle. Afterward he had a scar on his head that remained hairless. When she heard that Maung Aye Kyaw had a birthmark, she related it to this healed scar on Maung Shwe's head. Daw Yee had instructed Maung Aye Kyaw not to talk about the death of Maung Shwe with Daw Aye Sein

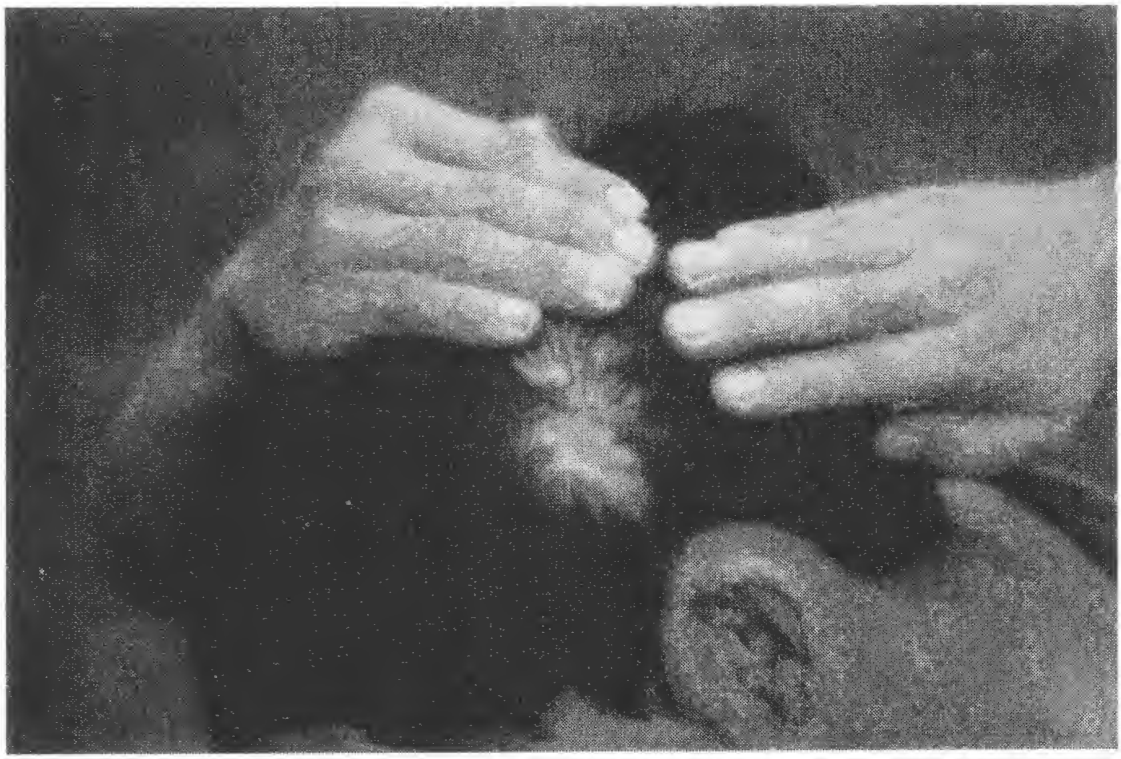

Figure 4-16 Birthmark on the head of Maung Aye Kyaw as it appeared in November 1972, when he was 20½ years old. It was a hairless, puckered area about 3 centimeters long and 1 centimeter wide; its center was depressed.

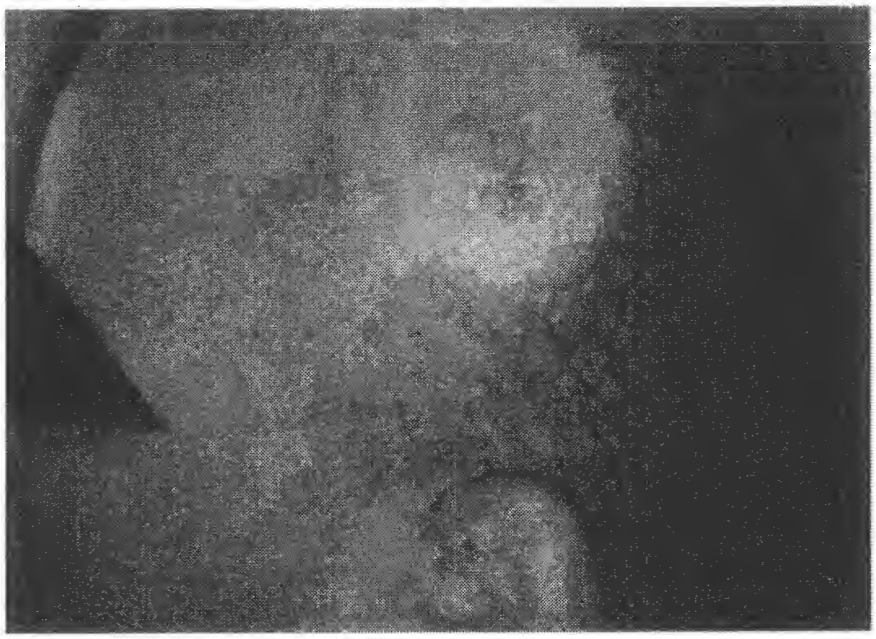

Figure 4-17 Gunshot wound of entry in a man murdered in Virginia. The bullet entered the scalp and skull at an acute angle and made a large, elongated wound instead of a smaller, round one. (Courtesy of Dr. David Wiecking.)

so as not to revive her grief. (This was still vivid in 1977, and she wept when talking with us about Maung Shwe's death.) She, for her part (and probably for the same reason), never asked Maung Aye Kyaw about any memories he had of Maung Shwe's death. She therefore knew nothing about Maung Aye Kyaw's statement that he had been shot in the head, and when she learned about his birthmark, she automatically connected it with the healed scar on Maung Shwe's head.

When we asked Daw Aye Sein to show (or tell) us where the scar had been on Maung Shwe's head, she was vague about its location but thought it had been at the back of his head, and she gestured with her hand toward the right occipital area of her own head.

We tried to continue our inquiry in this matter. Unfortunately, when we were next in Nga-Zun (in 1980) Maung Aye Kyaw and Ma Hla Myine were away from the town. By correspondence later, we learned that Ma Hla Myine remembered that Maung Shwe had had a scar on his head; but we did not learn its location.

Comment. Although I have studied some cases in which a birthmark derives from a wound made long before death, cases of this type are rare. Those of Savitri Devi Pathak and Jennifer Pollock (to be reported later in this work) are among the few examples of this group known to me. In most of the cases involving violent death, the birthmark (or birth defect, in some instances) corresponds to the wound that caused the previous personality's death.

I should note here that Maung Aye Kyaw's elongated birthmark does not resemble the round birthmarks that correspond to wounds of entry (made by bullets) in other cases, such as those of Maung Tinn Sein and Henry Elkin (to mention only cases the reader has already studied in this volume). I speculate regarding this that the murderer firing the shot into Maung Shwe's head might have aimed poorly so that the bullet entered not at right angles to the skull, but somewhat obliquely. This would have led to a larger and elongated area of destruction at the site of the bullet's entry (Fatteh, 1976). Figure 4-17 shows a gunshot wound of entry of this type, the bullet having entered the scalp and skull at an acute angle. The elongated birthmark on Maung Aye Kyaw's head could have corresponded to such a wound. A shotgun held against the head when fired would also have produced a large wound of entry, and a birthmark derived from such a wound might be as large as Maung Aye Kyaw's.

Other Relevant Medical Information. In some cases informants have mentioned similarities of physique and facial appearance between the subject and previous personality. I take up this topic in a later section of this work. However, the present case does not belong in the group for which such physical similarities were claimed. Ma Hla Myine said that Maung Aye Kyaw and Maung Shwe resembled each other in the agility of their minds, but not in physical appearance. Maung Shwe was taller and thinner than Maung Aye Kyaw.

Comment

Before leaving this case, I shall comment further on item 7 of Table 4-1—Maung Aye Kyaw's expressed regrets over not completing the religious ceremony

Figure 4-18 Maung Aye Kyaw and his wife, Ma Hla Myine. This photograph was taken on November 5, 1972.

of donating the image of the Buddha to the pagoda at Tada-U. This is an example of "unfinished business" that occurs frequently in the memories of the subjects of these cases. The most common examples of unfinished business are cases of young children needing maternal care when their mother dies. However, the subjects may also remember debts owed to the previous personality or debts and other obligations that they (in the previous life) owed to other persons.[23] Within the memories of one life uncompleted tasks tend to be remembered better than completed ones (Atkinson, 1953; Zeigarnik, 1927).

[23]Examples of the unfinished business of young children needing maternal care occurred in the cases of Sukla Gupta, Shanti Devi, Swarnlata Mishra, Pratima Saxena, and Lalitha Abeyawardena.

Examples of the unfinished business of debts owed by and to the previous personality occurred in the cases of İsmail Altınkılıç, Daw Tin Yee, and Ma Htwe Yin.

Figure 4-19 View of scene during my interview with Maung Aye Kyaw at Nga-Zun on November 5, 1972. Ma Hla Myine is crouching on the ground facing the camera.

THE CASE OF DAW AYE MYINT

Summary of the Case and Its Investigation

Daw Aye Myint was born in 1945 in the village of Kyauktan, Mahlaing Township, Upper Burma. Her parents were U Chit and Daw Ngwe Thein, and she was their only child. U Chit died soon after Daw Aye Myint's birth.

Daw Aye Myint was born with several prominent birthmarks (Figures 4-20 and 4-21), but her parents attached no particular significance to them at the time. When Ma Aye Myint (as she then was) was about 5 years old, her mother remembered that a man she had known, U San Nyunt, had told her, not long before his death, that if he died he would be reborn as her daughter. (He had been killed in 1944, soon after he had said this.) Remembering this, Daw Ngwe Thein asked Ma Aye Myint whether she could explain the birthmark on her head. Ma Aye Myint said that she had been U San Nyunt. Daw Ngwe Thein then asked her how she had died. Ma Aye Myint replied that she had been cut down when debarking a tree. She said that she had been killed at "Taukwin," which her mother thought was her child's transmogrification of the name of a village called Wun-ka-paw. She did not mention the name of U San Nyunt's murderer, and she apparently said little else about the previous life.

Figure 4-20 Birthmark on the head of Daw Aye Myint as it appeared in 1972, when she was 27 years old. The birthmark was a hairless area having the appearance of the scar of a healed wound. It was approximately 15 centimeters long and 9 millimeters wide, except at the front end where it expanded into a larger, circular area that was about 1.5 centimeters in diameter. The surface of the birthmark was somewhat irregular and had the appearance of a keloid.

Ma Aye Myint asked her mother to take her to visit U Tun We, the older brother of U San Nyunt, who was living in Kyauktan. When Ma Aye Myint met him, she said that he was her brother of the previous life.

We first learned about this case in a letter (of June 1971) to U Win Maung written by Maung Aye Kyaw,[24] a young man (later a law student and, still later, a lawyer) who obtained much information for us about cases in the township of Mahlaing, where he lived. His brief report of the case derived mainly from statements Daw Ngwe Thein had made to his sister, Daw Chit Khin, who also lived in Kyauktan.

In November 1972, U Win Maung and I went to Kyauktan and interviewed Daw Aye Myint and several other informants about the case. In November 1975, Daw Aye Myint took the trouble of coming from her village into Mahlaing in

[24]This Maung Aye Kyaw should not be confused with the subject of the preceding case. The Burmese custom of using only given names leads fairly often to several or even many persons having the same name. When this happens, persons with the same name are distinguished by mentioning the names of their parents or the places where they live.

Figure 4-21 Anterior part of the birthmark on Daw Aye Myint's head. This photograph was also taken in 1972. This area shows some puckering and is also hypopigmented.

order to meet us, and we interviewed her again. In 1977 we were again in Kyauktan and had another brief interview with Daw Ngwe Thein.

Persons Interviewed during the Investigation

In Kyauktan we interviewed:

Daw Aye Myint
Daw Ngwe Thein, Daw Aye Myint's mother
U Tun We, older brother of U San Nyunt
U Kyu, villager

Relevant Facts of Geography and Acquaintance between the Families Concerned

Kyauktan is a medium-sized village in the township of Mahlaing. I estimate that its population at the time this case developed would have been less than 1,000.

Although all the families of a village like Kyauktan would know each other, it does not follow that a small child like Ma Aye Myint had seen, let alone met, U Tun We, before her mother took her to meet him. The compounds of the houses in Burmese villages are nearly always enclosed by fences of bamboo or brambles,

and young preschool children would ordinarily be required to play in the family's compound without going into the lanes.

Daw Ngwe Thein said that when Ma Aye Myint was between 3 and 5 years old, their family moved close to U Tun We. In fact, the houses of the two families were only one house apart. Even so, Daw Ngwe Thein had to escort Ma Aye Myint to meet U Tun We. She began asking her mother to do this after she first began to say that she was U San Nyunt.

The Life and Death of U San Nyunt

U San Nyunt was born in Kyauktan in about 1919. His parents were U Thu Daw and Daw Thein, and they had at least two other children, one of whom was U Tun We. U San Nyunt became a cultivator.

U San Nyunt fell in love with Daw Ngwe Thein, but she did not requite his love, and in about 1942 she married U Chit instead. However, U San Nyunt continued to be strongly attracted to Daw Ngwe Thein. In 1944, when he was about 25 years old, he planned a trip to Pegu District (south of Mahlaing but north of Rangoon), where he was going to buy and collect vegetable dyes. Before he left, he gave Daw Ngwe Thein a ring with a white stone and said that if he died he hoped to be reborn to her as a girl. Because Daw Ngwe Thein had no special interest in him, she considered U San Nyunt's prediction rather presumptuous.

Two other persons told us that U San Nyunt had said that he would be reborn as a child to Daw Ngwe Thein. U Tun We had heard him say this. U Kyu recalled that U San Nyunt had come to his house just before he left for Pegu and had repeated his prediction that if he died he would be reborn as a child to Daw Ngwe Thein. Neither of these informants had heard U San Nyunt say that he would be reborn as a girl. U San Nyunt appears to have been a thoroughly masculine person; among our informants only Daw Ngwe Thein mentioned that he had expressed an indication that he would be reborn as a girl.

Another villager of Kyauktan, U Aye, accompanied U San Nyunt on his trip to Pegu. He and U San Nyunt had been friends since childhood. U San Nyunt was carrying 700 rupees in Japanese currency. (The Japanese continued to occupy Burma until the spring of 1945; see Appendix B.)

No one learned what happened to U San Nyunt with certainty. When he did not return to Kyauktan, "it was given out" that he had gone by bus to Mandalay. (Mandalay is northeast of Mahlaing and therefore in the opposite direction to Pegu for anyone traveling from Mahlaing.) In those days communications were difficult, and news traveled exceedingly slowly, if at all. U Aye returned to Kyauktan, and villagers remarked that his dah (meaning in this case, a Burmese sword) was stained with blood and that he had a lot of money.

Later, information reached Kyauktan about the discovery of a body presumed to be U San Nyunt's at a village in the Pegu District. U Tun We and another of his brothers went down to Pegu and found U San Nyunt's body at the village of Wun-ka-paw; but by the time they got there—a month after the death—the

body had become badly decomposed, and U Tun We could not determine, or did not notice, where the wounds on his brother's body had been. He and his other brother buried U San Nyunt's body where he had been killed.

The headmen of the two villages concerned, Wun-ka-paw and Kyauktan, concluded that U Aye had murdered U San Nyunt. U Aye, not surprisingly, denied the murder, and no charges were lodged against him.

U Aye nevertheless appears to have had a guilty conscience. One of his children, Ma Khin San, remembered a previous life, and I report her case later in this work. Ma Khin San had prominent birthmarks and congenital malformations. No one could possibly confuse these with the birthmarks of Daw Aye Myint. Nevertheless, when Ma Khin San first talked about her birthmarks, U Aye suppressed her, sometimes cruelly. He appears to have thought that she was U San Nyunt (or possibly another of his victims) reborn, and he evidently feared that, if she went on prattling as she was, she would inevitably expose one of his crimes.

U Aye died in about 1954. We were told that a boy of a neighboring village (born after U Aye's death) later claimed to have been U Aye in his previous life, but we have not met him.

Statements Made by Daw Aye Myint

I have already given the main statements Daw Aye Myint told her mother about the previous life: that she had been U San Nyunt; that she had been cut down when debarking a tree;[25] that she had been killed at "Taukwin"; and that U Tun We was her brother of the previous life.

U Tun We informed U Win Maung and me of one further detail stated by Daw Aye Myint. This is that she, as U San Nyunt, had been cut down by the murderer *from behind.*

When we first met Daw Aye Myint in 1972, her memories of the previous life had almost entirely faded. (I did not learn at what age she stopped speaking spontaneously about the previous life.) She said that she only remembered that she had been killed on a trip to lower Burma and that she had died during the Japanese occupation of Burma. She did not remember, as from persisting imaged memories, on what part of his body U San Nyunt had been wounded; but she could surmise this from the location of her birthmarks.

Daw Aye Myint's Statements about Events Occurring after U San Nyunt's Death and before Her Birth. I asked Daw Aye Myint how, if she had been U San Nyunt in a previous life, she had returned to Kyauktan in order to be reborn there. She said she recalled "following a cart going to Kyauktan." She did

[25]Certain trees that grow in Burma, such as at least one species of acacia, provide a dye from their bark. It was presumed that U San Nyunt and U Aye, in addition to buying dyes that other persons had prepared, tried by themselves, when an opportunity afforded, to cut bark from trees that they could use in preparing dyes. It was later conjectured that U Aye had somehow persuaded U San Nyunt to strip bark from a tree and then, while he was doing this, struck him from behind with his sword.

not recall anyone—in a realm of discarnate persons—telling her to follow the cart or otherwise directing her.

Daw Aye Myint's Behavior Related to the Previous Life

Daw Aye Myint's Attachment to U Tun We. I have already mentioned that Daw Aye Myint asked her mother to take her to visit U Tun We (U San Nyunt's brother) and that she told him he was her brother. Thereafter she used to visit U Tun We frequently. After the first one or several visits she went to see him without her mother.

Daw Aye Myint's Phobias. When she was a young girl, Daw Aye Myint had a marked phobia of young men of about the age of 25. This had been U Aye's age at the time he had murdered, as is supposed, U San Nyunt. Daw Aye Myint hid when she saw young men of this age. In 1975 Daw Aye Myint told me that when she was young she had a phobia of people with short hair. In those days, meaning when she was a young child in the late 1940s and early 1950s, the Burmese villagers wore long hair, but U Aye had worn his hair short.[26]

Daw Aye Myint's Attitude toward U Aye. Daw Aye Myint denied that she had ever had thoughts of revenge against U Aye.

Both Daw Ngwe Thein and U Tun We said that Daw Aye Myint (as a child) had not mentioned the name of the murderer of U San Nyunt, presumed by them to be U Aye. However, in 1975 Daw Aye Myint referred casually, it seemed to me, to U Aye as the murderer of U San Nyunt. I assume that she had simply come to accept the general judgment of the villagers that U Aye had murdered U San Nyunt. It is also possible that as a child she had remembered U Aye as the murderer of U San Nyunt, but from prudence—U Aye was still living then—she had not spoken aloud this detail of her memories.

Daw Aye Myint's Sexual Orientation. Daw Ngwe Thein said that Daw Aye Myint never exhibited any inclination toward masculine behavior or habits. She never, for example, wore her longyi in the masculine style as have some other Burmese girls who have remembered previous lives as men.[27] She never commented on being a girl, as if there was anything strange in her being one. Her behavior

[26]This is the first instance in this volume of a subject's showing a generalized response to an entire class of persons who were connected with the death of the previous personality.

Other examples include Jagdish Chandra (aversion to all persons with beards, mistakenly judged to be Moslems), Nirankar Bhatnagar (fear of Moslems), Cemil Fahrici, Lal Jayasooria, Sujith Lakmal Jayaratne (fear of police), Som Pit Hancharoen (fear of women), Ravi Shankar Gupta (fear of barbers and washermen), and Salem Andary (animosity toward Bedouins).

[27]Ma Tin Aung Myo, Ma Myint Myint Zaw, and Ma Khin Ma Gyi were three Burmese girls who remembered previous lives as males and who preferred to wear masculine clothes when they were young children. (Ma Tin Aung Myo persisted in this habit in adulthood.)

Numerous subjects of sex change cases in other countries have shown cross-dressing when young. Female subjects of this group include: Dolon Champa Mitra, Ruby Kusuma Silva, Sivanthie and Sheromie Hettiaratchi, Erin Jackson, and Ampan Petcherat.

from her early childhood was appropriately feminine. When Daw Aye Myint grew up, she married, seemed happy in her marriage, and gave birth to three children.

In 1972 I asked Daw Aye Myint which sex she preferred, and she replied that she would rather be a man, because men have greater freedom than women. But in 1975 she reversed herself; she then told me that she preferred being a girl because they can stay in a village. She liked to remain in Kyauktan or, at most, travel out of it just for a day. U San Nyunt, she said, had had to travel long distances from the village—this was perhaps a reference to his fatal journey to Pegu—and she would not care to be away on such long journeys.

Daw Aye Myint's Birthmarks

Daw Aye Myint had two large birthmarks, one on her head and one on her abdomen. (She mentioned a third birthmark on her breast, but her mother described only two birthmarks to us.)

We did not see the birthmark on Daw Aye Myint's abdomen, and so I can only report what her mother, Daw Ngwe Thein, told us about it. It crossed Daw Aye Myint's abdomen from side to side. It was bleeding when she was born and did not completely heal until she was about 5 years old.

Figure 4-20 shows the extensive birthmark on Daw Aye Myint's head. It consisted of an area of hairlessness running almost the entire length of the top of her head, a little to the right of the midline. The hairless area was about 15 centimeters long and 9 millimeters wide. At the front end there was a larger, circular hairless area about 1.5 centimeters in diameter. The surface of the birthmark was uneven, and it had the appearance of a keloid.

Daw Ngwe Thein said that when Daw Aye Myint was born the birthmark on her head was suppurating. In efforts to check the infection, "all sorts of herbs" were put on the area for 13 months. These failed and were followed by an application of powdered human bones; the wound then healed.[28]

Daw Aye Myint said that she had had some pain in the area of the birthmark. She said this disappeared after the wound healed.[29] She must then have been quite young, and it is somewhat unusual for a person to remember having pain at such a young age. In any event, the pains she experienced in her head seemed related to soreness in the suppurating birthmark itself and not to other sources of headache or head pain.

In 1975 Daw Aye Myint said that she suffered occasionally from headache when she had what she referred to as "sunstroke," by which I think she meant when she became excessively hot. She did not relate these headaches to the birthmark on her head and had no soreness there at that time.

[28]In the report of the case of Duran İncirgöz, I listed some other subjects whose birthmarks oozed, suppurated or bled at birth. This feature is also noted in the list of cases in Appendix C.

[29]Although Daw Ngwe Thein said the birthmark on her daughter's head healed when she was 13 months old, Daw Aye Myint herself and a neighbor, Daw Kyi (not otherwise an informant for the case), said that it did not heal until she was about 5 years old.

Comment on the Connection between Daw Aye Myint's Birthmarks and the Murder of U San Nyunt. I have already mentioned that no one knows exactly how U San Nyunt was murdered. But if we combine what we do know, accept Daw Aye Myint's statements about being attacked from behind while U San Nyunt was debarking a tree, and accept also that her birthmarks correspond to wounds on the body of U San Nyunt, we can conjecture how he was killed with some plausibility, as follows.

A murderer in Burma (of the period of this case) would usually aim at despatching his victim by decapitating him with one stroke of the sword. (Figure 4-22 shows a Burmese sword of the kind that might have figured in this case.) If a person being murdered has some warning, he will try to defend himself or escape. Therefore, either he must be struck from behind or his hands must be slashed and disabled before his head can be properly severed from the rest of the body. We can therefore picture U San Nyunt facing a tree and reaching up in order to strip some bark from it. His murderer—U Aye in all likelihood—could not have approached him from the side for a decisive horizontal cut at the neck without his victim seeing him. So he struck him on the head from behind. U San Nyunt would then have fallen backwards to the ground, and the murderer would have finished his work by sinking the sword into the victim's trunk.

Daw Aye Myint's birthmarks and her statements accord with what was known or could be reasonably surmised about the death of U San Nyunt; but they are not verified.

Comment

Daw Aye Myint made no verifiable statements outside the knowledge of the persons to whom she talked. Her case is somewhat unusual for the paucity of her statements about the previous life, as well as for her failure to say anything whatever about it until the age of 5; and she mentioned her memories then only when her mother questioned her directly. However, as I suggested above, she may have refrained from speaking earlier, and from saying more, out of fear of U Aye.

THE CASE OF NIRANKAR BHATNAGAR

Summary of the Case and Its Investigation

Nirankar Bhatnagar was born in Kanpur, Uttar Pradesh, India, on August 7, 1935. His parents were Devi Prasad Bhatnagar and his wife, Imarta Devi. They were members of the Kayasth caste and economically of the middle classes. Nirankar had one older and one younger brother.

When Nirankar was about 2½ years old, he was observed to be filling small bottles with water, and when questioned about this he said that his wife was ill and he was going to take medicines to her. He then gave out some further details

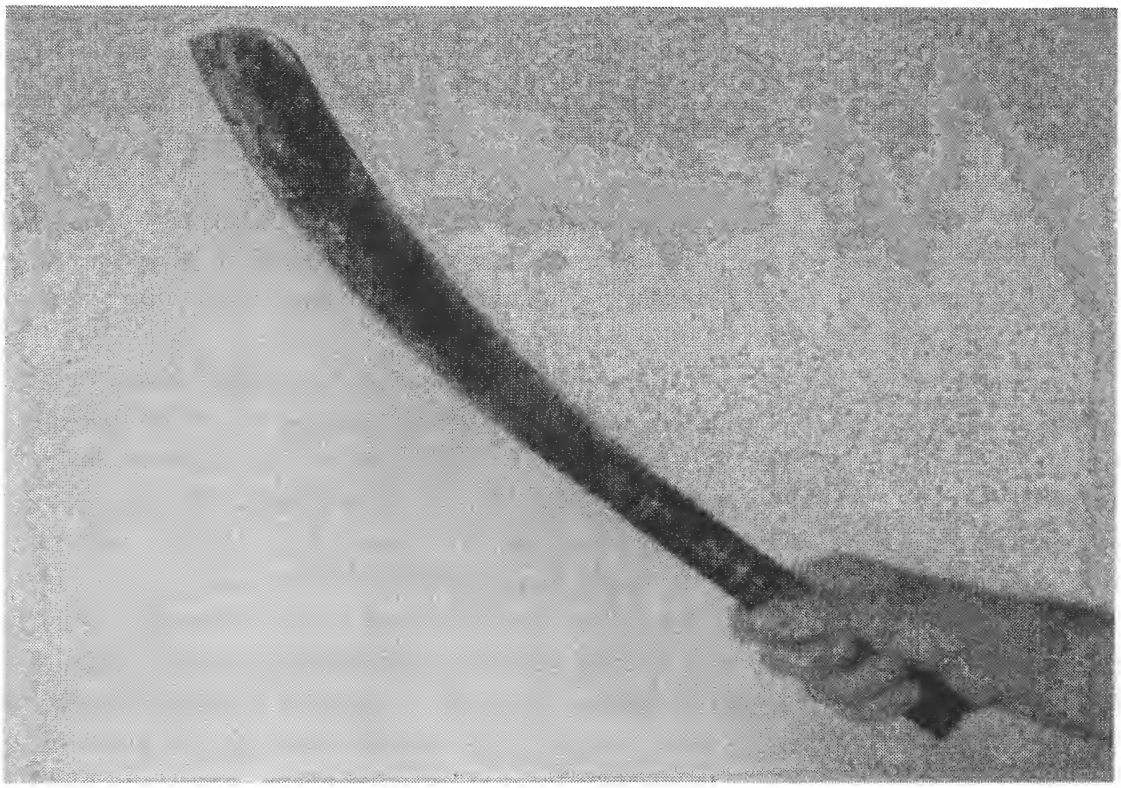

Figure 4-22 Sword of Burma of a kind that might have been used to inflict a wound corresponding to the birthmark on Daw Aye Myint's head.

of a previous life that he was remembering. He said that his name was Mukhtiar and that he had been killed by Moslems.

A friend of Nirankar's mother, learning of his references to a previous life, suggested to her that they take him to the house of one Shiv Dayal Mukhtiar, which was nearby. (Shiv Dayal Mukhtiar had been killed in 1931 during a communal riot.) Nirankar showed the way to this house (not entirely on his own), and he and the adults following him entered it. Inside, Nirankar went to the bedroom where Shiv Dayal Mukhtiar's wife was sleeping. He said: "This is my wife." When Shiv Dayal Mukhtiar's wife woke up, the visitors told her why they had come, and she took Nirankar in her arms. Nirankar recognized a number of objects in the house, such as a typewriter, a walking stick, and some shoes, that had belonged to Shiv Dayal Mukhtiar.

Reports of this case reached journalists who gave it widespread publicity. *The Leader* of Allahabad published an account of the case on April 4, 1938. Following the publication of this newspaper report, and of many others, throngs of curious persons invaded the Bhatnagar home in order to marvel at the prodigy they considered Nirankar to be. Some attributed healing powers to him and sought his blessing.[30] Nirankar's family found these attentions—harmless on a small

[30]Other subjects who have been similarly venerated include Gopal Gupta and Virendra Sharma.

scale—suffocating when offered by the crowds that continued coming for 6 months. They therefore decided to suppress Nirankar's memories and sent him away to stay with an aunt. During these 6 months, Nirankar had continued talking about the previous life, but thereafter his memories faded. I do not know by what age he had completely forgotten the previous life.

Later in 1938, S. C. Bose, who investigated about a dozen cases in India that year, came to Kanpur, studied this one, and wrote a short account of it. He interviewed informants only a few months after the case developed, and I have drawn on his account (Bose, 1960) for this report.

In about 1975 Dr. Satwant Pasricha and I began a systematic search for the subjects (who might still be living) of cases in India reported by earlier investigators in the 1920s and 1930s. We eventually traced informants for 36 cases that had developed before 1935 and compared their features with a series of cases whose subjects were born after 1965 (Pasricha and Stevenson, 1987). Nirankar Bhatnagar figured in the list of these older subjects we tried to trace.

We had no address for him (other than the large city of Kanpur), and our only clue for finding him came from the name of a school in Kanpur at which two teachers who had been firsthand informants for S. C. Bose in 1938 had taught. In October 1976 Dr. Pasricha and I went to that school and enquired after these teachers. One of them was remembered by one of his students, who was himself teaching then at this school; but the teacher we wanted had died. The teacher's son was said to be still living, but I did not expect to learn much from him, even if we could have found him. In permitting myself to feel discouraged, I failed to take account of Dr. Pasricha's extraordinary resourcefulness in tracing informants who seemed to have eluded us. We went to the area where the deceased teacher had lived and began to ask about the whereabouts of his son. During Dr. Pasricha's enquiries, someone in the crowd responded when she mentioned the name of Nirankar Bhatnagar, and she immediately asked where Nirankar was living. It turned out that he lived—had indeed been living all his life—in the same sector of Kanpur as the deceased teacher; this explains why the teacher had become a witness for S. C. Bose's investigation in 1938.

Equipped with Nirankar's address, we went immediately to his house and found him there. He remembered little about his own case and had long since forgotten the imaged memories of the previous life that he had had as a child. (He was 41 years old when we met him.) However, we were able to meet his older brother, Omkar, and two other firsthand informants for the case.

Omkar was only 2 years older than Nirankar, and much of what he told us was necessarily secondhand. The other two informants were better placed in chronological position. The first was Shanti Sharma, a woman of late middle age who had been a close friend of Nirankar's (and Omkar's) mother. (Their parents had both died.) The second was Vishnu Dayal Raizada, the son of Shiv Dayal Mukhtiar, whose life Nirankar had earlier remembered. Vishnu Dayal Raizada was about 52 years old when Dr. Pasricha and I interviewed him. He had been 7 at the time of his father's death in 1931. He appeared to have a good memory both of

that event and of the main events of the case when it developed in 1938. I cannot say to what extent his information derived from his own preserved primary memories and to what extent from what he had learned through listening to other persons later. I am certain, however, that he did not rehearse a concordance of what he told us with what the Bhatnagars said.

On December 6, 1981, Dr. Pasricha was able to interview Shanti Bhatnagar in Varanasi. She was an older cousin of Nirankar and was a firsthand witness of what he had said when a young child, including the occasion when he first went to Shiv Dayal's house. At that time she had been a young lady, and she had married soon after the case developed.

In 1982 I studied newspaper accounts of the Kanpur communal riot of 1931 at the India Office Newspaper Library in London.

Persons Interviewed during the Investigation

In Kanpur we interviewed:

Nirankar Bhatnagar
Omkar Bhatnagar, Nirankar's older brother
Shanti Sharma, a close friend of Nirankar's mother, Imarta Devi
Vishnu Dayal Raizada, Shiv Dayal's son

In Varanasi, Dr. Pasricha interviewed:

Shanti Bhatnagar, Nirankar Bhatnagar's first cousin

Relevant Facts of Geography and Possibilities for Normal Means of Communication between the Two Families

Both the families in this case lived in the Prem Nagar quarter of Kanpur. At the time the case developed in the 1930s, the houses of the Bhatnagars and Shiv Dayal Mukhtiar were about 100 meters apart. (Subsequently, the Bhatnagars moved a little farther away, and in 1976 they were living about 200 meters from Shiv Dayal's house, although still in Prem Nagar.) Shiv Dayal Mukhtiar was killed at a place called Chaman Ganj. It is about 200 meters from the house the Bhatnagars occupied in the 1930s.

Before the development of the case the families concerned were acquainted, but not close friends. Vishnu Dayal Raizada said that the families had not exchanged social visits before Nirankar's first visit to Shiv Dayal's house.

Since Shiv Dayal Mukhtiar was a prominent lawyer who had been killed in a communal riot, Nirankar's family knew the general circumstances of his death, as did everyone else in the neighborhood. (However, as I shall explain, no one seems to have learned exactly how Shiv Dayal was killed.) Similarly, members of the Bhatnagar family knew the location of Shiv Dayal's house and could recognize his widow. The principal significance of the case lies, therefore, not in Nirankar's statements about the previous life, but in his unusual related behavior and in his birthmark.

The Life, Death, and Character of Shiv Dayal Mukhtiar

Shiv Dayal Mukhtiar[31] was born in 1896. His family, like that of the Bhatnagars, belonged to the Kayasth caste, although the two families belonged to different septs of the caste. Shiv Dayal trained as a lawyer. He lived and practiced law in the Prem Nagar quarter of Kanpur.

His first wife bore several children, but she then became ill with tuberculosis, from which she died after a prolonged illness. Shiv Dayal married again in late 1930 or early 1931, a few months before his own death.

Even if we discounted heavily the praise his son gave him, we should have to reckon Shiv Dayal Mukhtiar an unusually good person. He was generous and kind-hearted, sometimes taking the legal cases of poor persons without a fee. He helped pay the expenses of weddings for those who could not afford to pay for their own. At the time of his death he was one of the leading and most respected lawyers of Kanpur.

The communal riot in Kanpur of March 1931 was particularly bloody. The Hindus and Moslems killed each other until dead bodies were stacked up in piles. The riot occurred in the Prem Nagar quarter, where at that time Moslems and Hindus lived in adjoining houses.[32] *The Leader* (published in Allahabad) of March 27, 28, 29, and 30, 1931, gave extensive reports of the riot and estimated that 130 persons were killed and 335 injured.

In his report of the case, S. C. Bose gave no information about the death of Shiv Dayal Mukhtiar beyond saying that he was "assassinated" during the Hindu-Moslem riot in Kanpur.

The account of Nirankar's case in *The Leader* of April 30, 1938, reported what Nirankar had said about how Shiv Dayal Mukhtiar had been killed, but it also did not provide any information about the actual events that verified Nirankar's statements.

According to Vishnu Dayal Raizada, a distant relative of his father sent a message to him during the riot with an urgent request for help. He especially asked Shiv Dayal to bring his gun with him. Shiv Dayal was willing to go, but as he was leaving his house, his wife "snatched away his gun,"[33] perhaps because she

[31]The word *Mukhtiar* is a vocational designation for solicitors, not a family name. This explains why Vishnu Dayal Raizada's last name was different from his father's.

[32]This riot received a line of mention in *The Oxford History of India* (V. A. Smith, 1958, p. 796). It drew some attention outside the community in which it occurred, because, coming soon after the truce arranged between Mahatma Gandhi and Lord Irwin, the British Viceroy, it seemed to work against the harmony that they were trying to achieve for India, and it embittered the Moslems. Although before the riot the Moslems and Hindus of the area had lived in neighboring houses, afterward they moved to separate quarters.

In a riot of this kind it would be exceedingly difficult, and in most instances impossible, to know afterward who had killed whom and in what manner.

[33]This detail seems implausible. It is unlikely that a woman would have been able to take a gun away from a man forcibly. Yet Shiv Dayal's wife might have pleaded with him and even wrestled with him until he let her have the gun. It is also possible that the gun was locked in a household almirah (cupboard) of which Shiv Dayal's wife had the key, which she would not give up to him. This interpretation accords with Nirankar's reference to not being "given" a gun in the previous life, but does not verify his statement.

thought it would be dangerous for him to be seen with a firearm in the area of rioting. He went anyway and was attacked and killed. No member of the family saw his wounds, although they heard they were numerous. The dead were carried away by the British police and summarily cremated.

Dr. Pasricha and I found the registration of Shiv Dayal's death in the Municipal Registry at Kanpur. The date (March 25, 1931) was given, but for the cause of death we found only the words "Killed in riot." *The Leader* of March 30 stated that the police had recovered "twelve corpses of Hindus, including that of Babu Shiv Dayal Mukhtiar, from the house of a Moslem." (The newspaper reports would be a day or more behind the events, so the date of death given in the Municipal Registry is not necessarily wrong, although it may be slightly off.)

Shiv Dayal was 35 years old when he died. He left young sons and daughters and was much mourned.

Statements and Recognitions Made by Nirankar

The sources of information for Nirankar's statements and recognitions have varying strengths and weaknesses. S. C. Bose recorded a statement from Nirankar himself in 1938 (within a few months of Nirankar's first visit to Shiv Dayal's house); but he made no systematic inquiries among the adult members of Nirankar's family with a view to learning from them what Nirankar had said before he had first gone to Shiv Dayal's house. Furthermore, Bose based his account of that first visit on the testimony of one of Nirankar's uncles, who was not a firsthand witness for it. On the other hand, when Shanti Sharma tried to recall what Nirankar had said and done before his first visit to Shiv Dayal's house, almost 40 years had passed since the events concerned. She, however, had been an adult at the time of these events. Our other witness, Vishnu Dayal Raizada, had been a mere boy of about 7. Considering these differences in the perspectives of the informants and the lapses of time before their statements were recorded, we may feel more surprise at the agreement between them than disappointment over their discrepancies.

According to S. C. Bose, Nirankar recalled in 1938 that:

1. His name was Mukhtiar Sahib.[34]
2. He was killed by Moslems with a dagger.
3. Many persons—Moslems—killed him.
4. After he was stabbed he became thirsty, but no one gave him any water.
5. His father, wife, a son, and two daughters were living.
6. He loved his family deeply.

[34]*Sahib* is an honorific, often placed after a proper name, to denote respect for the person named or that he has a superior status.

Shanti Sharma stated in 1976 to Dr. Pasricha and me:

> When he [Nirankar] was 2½ years old, he used to put water in a bottle. He would put on his socks and shoes and say: "I am going to see my wife." He would say: "My wife is not well. I am going to take my medicine to her." He used to save his pocket money and say: "I am going to give this to my children. I have small children." He used to say: "Moslems killed me." He was asked: "How were you killed?" He said: "I had gone to see a friend off on a train, and then when I came back I had a Moslem friend who asked me to come to him. He took me somewhere and started hitting me on the head with a lathi.[35] I fell down. Then I asked for water, but when I did this they stabbed me with a dagger. My name is Mukhtiar." He had given other names including those of two Moslems, but I have forgotten them.

Shanti Sharma described Nirankar's first visit to Shiv Dayal's house as follows:

> His mother and I were good friends. She told me what he had been saying. He was filling the bottle with water every day. He continued to talk like this for 10 or 15 days. One day I suggested that we should take him to Shiv Dayal's house, which was nearby....My son, Narendra K. Sharma,[36] took Nirankar in his arms and walked toward the house. When they reached the house, Nirankar said: "This is my house," and he wanted to get down. Narendra wanted to test him and so took him a little farther before letting him down. Nirankar then went running back to Shiv Dayal's house. (I was there, as were Nirankar's mother and sister. We were following.) It was summer and everyone in the house was sleeping. We knocked at the door and a servant opened it. Nirankar immediately went into the bedroom where Shiv Dayal Mukhtiar's wife was sleeping. Nirankar said: "This is my wife." He sat there for a while and said nothing more. Then I woke her up. She was startled [to find] a small group standing there. We told her: "This is Shiv Dayal Mukhtiar reborn"....She took him in her arms.
>
> Nirankar told his mother that he recognized various objects [in the house, such as a walking] stick, shoes, and a typewriter, that he said were his. He also mentioned a box that contained important documents. Shiv Dayal's widow asked Nirankar about particular documents and also about debtors, but he was unable to answer. By this time a crowd had gathered and he had become nervous.

[35]*Lathis* are heavy bamboo staffs usually about 7 or 8 feet long. (See Figure 4-24.) They are carried by nearly every Indian male villager when he goes out of his village. Ordinarily used for herding cattle and goats, they are helpful in defense and, if need be, in murder. City dwellers may also have lathis. The police in India are often armed with short lathis.

[36]This potentially valuable informant for the case had died by the time of our investigations in 1976.

> Shiv Dayal's wife asked Nirankar: "Would you like to eat something?" He said: "You know what I like." So she sent for rasgoolas [a type of Indian dessert]. He ate them, drank some water, and then asked for pan.[37]

Vishnu Dayal Raizada gave a slightly different account of Nirankar's first visit, which he described as follows:

> It might have been May or June. It was about 2:00 p.m. when Nirankar, followed by a few female members [of his family], stepped into our house. After passing through the courtyard he reached a room where my stepmother was sleeping. Nirankar caught hold of her hand. He woke her up by shaking her hand and said: "Why are you sleeping? I have come. Where is my gun? Where is my son?" He enquired about everybody.

Shanti Bhatnagar gave a substantially similar account of what Nirankar said as a small child. She said that she had been in the group that followed him to Shiv Dayal's house when he first went there. However, she seemed to have forgotten the other persons who were in the group apart from Nirankar, his mother, and herself.

Nirankar's identification of the correct house particularly impressed her. Asked how he knew they had come to the right place, he said: "My name is inscribed here." There was indeed some writing in Urdu on the door, and, although Shanti Bhatnagar knew no Urdu herself, she learned that the name was Shiv Dayal's. At first she had thought the Urdu writing was part of the design of the house. Nirankar had not mentioned that his (Shiv Dayal's) name was written on the door before he reached the house.

Readers interested in the vagaries of memory as well as in the truth of this case may find it helpful to read a third account of the first meeting between Nirankar and Shiv Dayal's widow, that of S. C. Bose. Bose derived his information from Har Prasad Bhatnagar, Nirankar's paternal uncle. He wrote:

> Har Prasad Bhatnagar said that Nirankar, while playing, filled a bottle with water (imitating a physician with medicine) and told his playmates that he was going to the house of Mukhtiar Sahib. (The boy had never been to Shiv Dayal Mukhtiar's house.) He told his parents that his wife was ill and that he was taking medicine to her. [His] parents, in order to see the truth of this, followed him and saw that the boy entered the house of the late Shiv Dayal. He showed

[37]Pan is the common Indian name for a preparation of betel (the leaf of *Piper betle*) which many Indians chew, along with various allegedly therapeutic additives. It seems to have some addictive properties.

Other subjects who have shown a desire or craving for stimulants and intoxicants that the concerned previous personalities of their cases had consumed are Bishen Chand Kapoor, Sujith Lakmal Jayaratne, Maung Myint Tin, Erkan Kılıç, Tali Sowaid, Muhittin Yılmaz, Sanjeev Sharma, Ma Zin Mar Oo, Maung Zaw Thein Lwin, and Wilfred Meares.

I did not learn whether Shiv Dayal Mukhtiar chewed betel.

> them the room in which his alleged wife was and knocked at the door of that room. A lady, whom he recognized as his wife, opened the door. Nirankar said: "I asked you for a gun and you did not give it [to me.] I was killed."

Har Prasad's account differs from the reports we heard almost 20 years later mainly in the detail of how Shiv Dayal's widow met Nirankar—at the door of her bedroom or awakened from sleep in her bed. Har Prasad was not, however, a first-hand witness of Nirankar's first visit to Shiv Dayal's house, as were our informants of 1976; their accounts of that event, although given so much later, are likely to be more accurate.

S. C. Bose included in his report of the case several recognitions attributed to Nirankar that our informants did not mention. He said that Nirankar showed the place where Shiv Dayal Mukhtiar had been killed. In addition:

> He also pointed out changes in the house, the construction of a staircase which had not been there before. He was given a number of photographs from among which he picked out the photograph of the late Shiv Dayal Mukhtiar and said that it was his portrait. He recognized the son and daughters of the late Shiv Dayal Mukhtiar.

Nirankar's Behavior Related to the Previous Life

Circumstances and Manner of Nirankar's Speaking about the Previous Life. I have already described Nirankar's opening statements about the previous life when members of his family questioned him about the bottles of "medicine" that he said he was going to take to his wife. After his first visit to Shiv Dayal's home he continued to talk about the previous life for another 4 to 6 months. I did not learn of particular stimuli for his references to it.

Nirankar seemed preoccupied with the folly of Shiv Dayal's going among the rioters without his gun. I have already mentioned Vishnu Dayal Raizada's report that Nirankar demanded "his" gun from Shiv Dayal's wife at his first meeting with her. (The gun also figured in S. C. Bose's report.) Nirankar's older brother, Omkar, said that Nirankar used to say: "If I had been given a gun, I would not have been killed." (Omkar had not himself heard Nirankar make such a statement; he had learned this from others, probably their parents.)

Nirankar's somewhat peremptory questions and responses to Shiv Dayal's wife showed a degree of what I call an "adult attitude" on the part of a young child. From Nirankar's perspective he was Shiv Dayal and entitled therefore to treat Shiv Dayal's wife authoritatively as Indian husbands (more in the 1930s than today) may do. Apart from this, his brother Omkar said that "he tended to dominate others."

As I mentioned earlier, Nirankar's family started a program of suppressing his references to the previous life that included sending him out of Kanpur to stay

with an aunt. S. C. Bose, who studied the case in late 1938, said that Nirankar spoke about the previous life "for a few days...and since then said nothing." This appears to be wrong, probably because it was based on information Bose obtained from Nirankar's paternal uncle, who would not have known as much about the case as Nirankar's own parents. Furthermore, Bose himself recorded some half a dozen statements that Nirankar made to him. It seems probable therefore that, like many other subjects of these cases, Nirankar continued to have some memories about the previous life after he had stopped speaking spontaneously about it. He could still talk about the memories when questioned, if he chose to do so. Subsequently, he lost even these memories, but I do not know when.

Nirankar's Attitude toward Shiv Dayal's Family. Shanti Sharma said that Nirankar saved his money to give to Shiv Dayal's children, and he even sometimes set aside a portion of his food to give them. (So far as I know, Shiv Dayal's family were not in need at this time; Nirankar's behavior appears to have shown paternal solicitude expressed with the manner and resources of a young child.) He visited Shiv Dayal's home often after the first occasion of meeting the family; and Shiv Dayal's sons, but not his wife, came to see him often.

Nirankar's Attitude toward Moslems. As a young child Nirankar had some animosity toward Moslems. Shanti Sharma recalled hearing him say more than once: "That Moslem is coming. I will kill him." Nirankar could not have expressed this antagonism often, because his older brother, Omkar, was not aware of it until our study of the case in 1976. At that time Dr. Pasricha and I asked Nirankar about his attitude toward Moslems. He said that he was not afraid of them, but felt some aversion for them; nevertheless, he had one Moslem friend.

Other Relevant Behavior of Nirankar

Apart from his mentioned aversion for Moslems, which did not amount to a phobia, Nirankar had no unusual fears. He said, in 1976, that he was not afraid of knives and daggers.

Evidence of Extrasensory Perception on the Part of Nirankar

Nirankar's almost compulsive insistence on taking medicines to Shiv Dayal's wife has at least two possible interpretations.

Shiv Dayal's first wife developed tuberculosis and ultimately died after a prolonged illness. Before her death she had stayed in a sanatorium at Nainital (a hill station in northern Uttar Pradesh). Shiv Dayal was almost certainly concerned about her illness, and Nirankar's bottles of "medicine" could be regarded as a continuation of Shiv Dayal's solicitude for her. I did not learn whether Shiv Dayal had actually taken medicines to his first wife.

Shiv Dayal's second wife, whom he married only a few months before his own death, was in good health at the time he died. Subsequently, however, she fell

ill, and, although not bedridden until near the end of her life, she was frail and took medicines. Her stepchildren brought these to her or she got them herself. Her stepson, Vishnu Dayal Raizada, said that she died of liver disease in 1938 in Benares (now Varanasi). This could not have been many months after Nirankar had met her. Nirankar's concern about taking medicines to his wife might therefore have arisen from an extrasensory awareness on his part of the illness from which Shiv Dayal's second wife suffered *after* Shiv Dayal's death.[38]

The Attitude of Shiv Dayal's Family toward Nirankar

Shiv Dayal's widow fully accepted Nirankar as her husband reborn. Omkar Bhatnagar said that when festivals occurred she treated him like a husband. She would invite him to lunch at such times as Holi and Diwali (important Hindu festival days)[39] and then prepare for him the food that Shiv Dayal had liked.

In 1976 Vishnu Dayal Raizada said that he believed Nirankar was his father reborn.

Nirankar's Birthmark

Neither S. C. Bose's report nor that of *The Leader* mentioned a birthmark on Nirankar. Nevertheless, when Dr. Pasricha and I enquired about one in 1976, Nirankar promptly pointed toward the top of his head, where we found the one shown in Figure 4-23. It was located almost in the midline at the top of the head. It consisted of an area of increased pigmentation that was hairless. It was irregular in shape and approximately 8 millimeters long and 4 millimeters wide.

We did not meet a person older than Nirankar who could confirm that the mark shown in Figure 4-23 was present at his birth. We might have expected that Shanti Bhatnagar would have known about the mark, since she was a member of the joint household up to the time of her marriage, when Nirankar was 3 or 4 years old; but she had either never heard of the mark or no longer remembered it in 1981.

The increased pigmentation in the mark speaks in favor of its being a birthmark instead of the scar of a postnatal injury or other lesion.

Nirankar had never suffered from headaches.

Because when he had been a child Nirankar had said that he was stabbed (as well as hit on the head with a lathi), I examined his chest—front and back—to see whether there were on it any marks that might be considered birthmarks corre-

[38]Other subjects have shown extrasensory perception with members of the previous family or persons known to the previous personality. I return to this topic and cite additional examples in the report of Sunita Khandelwal's case.

[39]Something seems to be wrong here. Nirankar's meeting with Shiv Dayal's family must have occurred shortly before April 4, 1938, the date of publication of a report of the case in *The Leader* of Allahabad. The Holi Festival occurs early in the year and Diwali in the autumn. If Shiv Dayal's widow invited Nirankar to a meal at these times, she probably died in 1939, not 1938 as Vishnu Dayal Raizada said.

Figure 4-23 Birthmark on Nirankar Bhatnagar's head as it appeared in 1976, when he was 41 years old. The birthmark was a hairless area of increased pigmentation, approximately 8 millimeters long and 4 millimeters wide.

sponding to stab wounds in the previous life that he had remembered. (Nirankar himself was not aware of any marks related to the previous life other than the one on his head.) I found nothing indicative of such a birthmark on his chest.

Comments on the Evidence of Paranormal Processes in the Case

I have already mentioned that because the families lived close together and had some acquaintance before the case developed, Nirankar's statements provide little or no evidence of paranormal knowledge. The case does, however, have several features found repeatedly in other cases of this type: the subject's insistence on going to the previous family and his concern about the welfare of its members; his

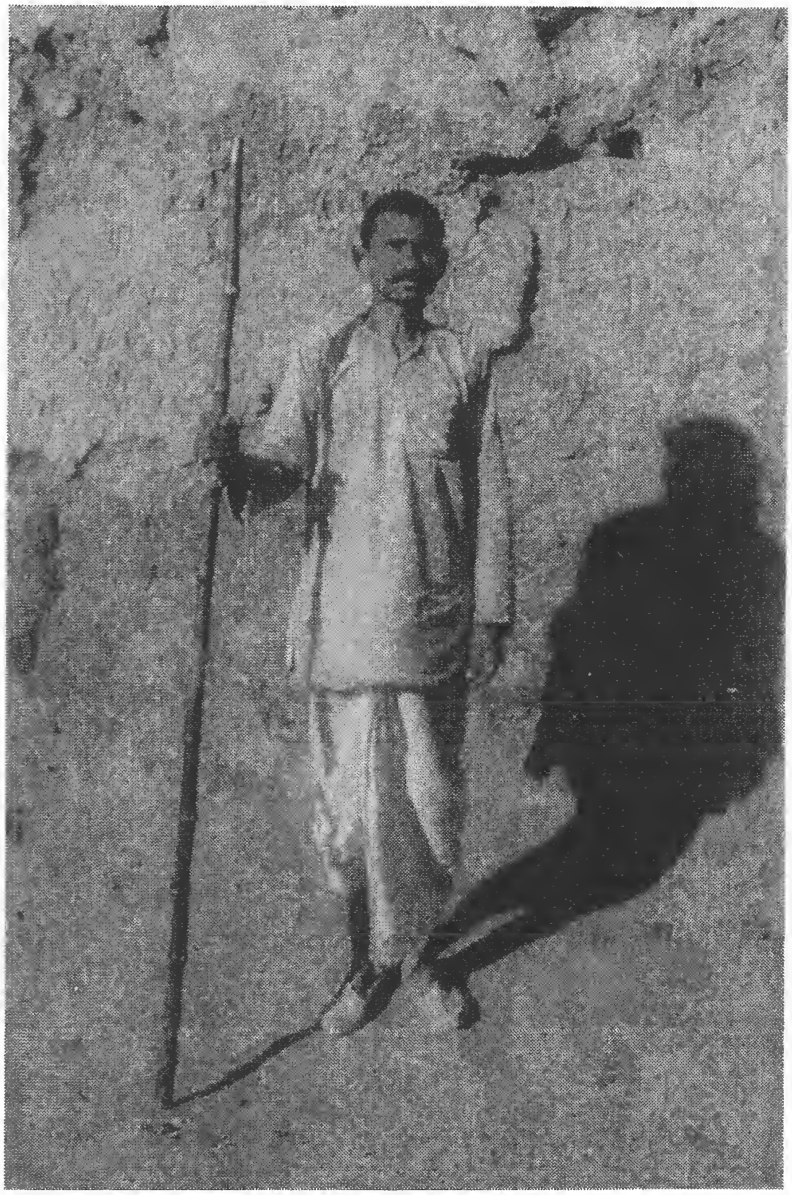

Figure 4-24 Indian villager carrying a lathi. Such a weapon might have been used in the murder of Shiv Dayal Mukhtiar.

assumption of an adult attitude toward a much older, unfamiliar woman; the emphasis in his memories on the events just before the death in the previous life; the slight aversion to Moslems (members of which group had killed the previous personality); and a hint of continuing the previous personality's habit of chewing betel.

To these features we must add, in making our evaluation, the birthmark Nirankar had. Although we have not verified how Shiv Dayal was killed, Nirankar's birthmark accords with his statement that Shiv Dayal was hit on the head with a lathi. It is noteworthy that Nirankar had no birthmark corresponding to the stab wound he said Shiv Dayal had also received. I discuss the significance of this observation in Chapter 14.

Nirankar's Later Development

After childhood, Nirankar's life developed along entirely ordinary lines. He attended Kanpur University, from which he obtained an M.A. degree in Economics. He married in 1969, and by 1976 he and his wife had three children. In 1976 he was employed as an economist in the state government of Uttar Pradesh. He worked in Lucknow (the administrative capital of the state), but returned to Kanpur several times a month. His general health was good.

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5

Birthmarks Corresponding to Wounds Verified by Informants' Memories

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter I present 10 cases in which informants verified from their memories the location of the wounds on the deceased person whose life the subject remembered. In all but two of these cases the informants were firsthand witnesses of the wounds; in those of Maung Tin Win and Aristide Kolotey I obtained only secondhand information for the location of the wounds.

Five of the subjects had only one birthmark; the other 4 each had two or more birthmarks. In two cases of the chapter (Chanai Choomalaiwong and Maung Tin Win) two birthmarks on the subject corresponded to bullet wounds of entry and exit.

I have grouped most of the cases in the chapter according to the mode of death in the previous life. First I present two cases in which death resulted from head injury. Then come three involving stabbings and three with deaths from gunshot wounds. In the next case death presumably resulted from drowning, but was immediately preceded by a slashing wound of the trunk from a sharp rock. In the last case death occurred in a fire, the intense heat of which caused expansion of abdominal gas and bursting of the abdomen; the subject's birthmark corresponded to the wound made when the abdomen opened.

CASE REPORTS

THE CASE OF MAUNG ZAW THEIN LWIN

Summary of the Case and Its Investigation

Maung Zaw Thein Lwin was born in Htandaw village, Mahlaing Township, Upper Burma, on March 20, 1968. He was the fifth and youngest child of his parents, U Khin Maung and Daw Ohn Kyin. U Khin Maung was a professional musician.

When Maung Zaw Thein Lwin was born, he had a large birthmark on the back of his head (Figure 5-1), which I shall describe later. No one in his family had a dream related to his birth. His family was later advised that the birthmark probably derived from a previous life, but they had no indication about whose previous life this might have been until Maung Zaw Thein Lwin began to speak about one.

When he was about 3 years old, he started saying: "I am U Mar Din. I was dead." At first his family thought he was talking about a man of the area called U Mar Din who was then away from his home, but thought to be still living. There was concern that this man had died and been reborn as Maung Zaw Thein Lwin. This man's wife, Daw Hla Myint, came over from their village and assured Maung Zaw Thein Lwin's family that her husband was still living. She further mentioned that another U Mar Din of the village of Pan Aing had died, and she went there to tell this U Mar Din's family about Maung Zaw Thein Lwin's statements. At about this time, Maung Zaw Thein Lwin was saying that he was from Pan Aing. (I am uncertain whether he said this before or after the correct family corresponding to his statements had been identified.) The U Mar Din who had died at Pan Aing had fallen from a building at the pagoda and fatally injured himself in 1965.

When U Mar Din's widow, Daw Khin Shein, heard about Maung Zaw Thein Lwin's statements, she came from Pan Aing to Htandaw to visit him. Her son, Maung Sein Tun, her sister-in-law, Daw Ohn Khin (U Mar Din's older sister), and several of her nieces accompanied her. When they met Maung Zaw Thein Lwin, he explained to them that he was U Mar Din reborn and made two definite recognitions of members of U Mar Din's family. (I shall describe these later.) On the same day, or perhaps the next day, Maung Zaw Thein Lwin went with his older brother and his cousin to Pan Aing, where he recognized various places and objects familiar to U Mar Din.

During this period of the case's development, and later, Maung Zaw Thein Lwin showed some unusual behavior (at least for his family) that accorded with U Mar Din's character and attitudes.

I first learned of the case on November 1, 1975. U Win Maung and I were in Mahlaing for the study of some cases already known to us. Maung Aye Kyaw, who had informed us about other cases in the area of Mahlaing including that of Daw Aye Myint, told us about this one. He had in fact already arranged for Maung

Figure 5-1 Birthmark on back of Maung Zaw Thein Lwin's head as it appeared in November 1975, when he was 7½ years old. The area of the birthmark showed the residual scar from a chronic infection at the site. It was hairless and had increased pigmentation compared with the surrounding skin. It was approximately 2.5 centimeters in diameter.

Zaw Thein Lwin and his mother to come into Mahlaing and meet us. I remember being considerably impressed when I saw Maung Zaw Thein Lwin's birthmark for the first time. Unfortunately, our program for that visit to Mahlaing (in 1975) was already full, so that U Win Maung and I were able to do little more than record a statement by Daw Ohn Kyin that included enough of the main facts of the case to make us wish to study it further. This we were able to do in February 1977, when we scheduled enough time for a further interview with Daw Ohn Kyin and for interviews with other informants.

In March 1980 we were again in Mahlaing and able to have a further interview with Maung Zaw Thein Lwin and Daw Ohn Kyin.

Persons Interviewed during the Investigation

In Mahlaing we interviewed:

Maung Zaw Thein Lwin

Daw Ohn Kyin, Maung Zaw Thein Lwin's mother
Daw Ohn Khin, U Mar Din's older sister

In Htandaw village we interviewed:
Daw Dwe, Daw Ohn Kyin's foster mother
Daw Nyunt, a neighbor of Daw Ohn Kyin

In Pan Aing village we interviewed:
Daw Khin Shein, U Mar Din's wife
Daw Main Galay, U Mar Din's assistant in masonry
U Ko Ko, retired headmaster of school at Pan Aing
U Kyi, U Mar Din's assistant in masonry

At our first meetings Maung Zaw Thein Lwin said nothing to us; he was apparently too shy to speak in our presence, and U Win Maung, who was skillful in helping subjects of all ages to talk with us, could not persuade him to speak about the previous life he was remembering. In 1980, however, he talked with us, perhaps because by then he had become accustomed to us.

Maung Zaw Thein Lwin's father, U Khin Maung, was in Mandalay, where he was working as a musician, during my investigation of the case in 1977; so I did not interview him then and have not met him since.

Relevant Facts of Geography and Possibilities for Normal Means of Communication between the Two Families

Mahlaing is a medium-sized town and the seat of a township in Upper Burma. Htandaw is a village about 1 kilometer north of Mahlaing. Pan Aing, the other village figuring in the case, lies about 3 kilometers northwest of Htandaw and is thus a total of about 4 kilometers from Mahlaing.

The two families concerned in this case were not related in any way, but they had some acquaintance with each other. Concerning the extent of this, Daw Ohn Kyin made different statements at different times. In 1975 she gave us to understand that she and her husband had been "very friendly" with U Mar Din; but in 1977, she modified this and said that she knew U Mar Din's sisters rather well, but that she had been "merely acquainted" with U Mar Din himself. In 1980 she said that she was very friendly with U Mar Din's sister, Daw Ohn Khin, but had not known him "at all." From these statements I infer that the friendship with U Mar Din to which Daw Ohn Kyin alluded in November 1975 was on the part of her husband and that she herself knew who he was, but had had little or no direct contact with him. Perhaps the best evidence of her lack of acquaintance with U Mar Din comes from her failure to learn about his injury even though, as she learned later, she was in Pan Aing when he fell and wounded himself fatally. She heard of his death only later, but had learned of it before Maung Zaw Thein Lwin's conception. Moreover, she evidently had not remembered well in 1975 all the details she had

learned of how U Mar Din had died, because she said then that he had fallen out of a tree; in fact, he had fallen from the roof of a building in a pagoda.

The Life, Death, and Character of U Mar Din

U Mar Din was born in about 1925. This date may be 5 years off. He lived and worked in the village of Pan Aing. He was a mason and specialized, one might say, in the maintenance and repair of the large monastery at Pan Aing. This monastery, which I visited in 1977, seemed large enough to employ at least one mason fulltime, and U Mar Din seems to have been the senior mason working at it. He had two assistants, although I do not know whether they were employed fulltime to work with him.

U Mar Din married Daw Khin Shein, and they had several children, of whom, however, only two survived infancy. These were Maung Sein Tun and Maung Tun We. Maung Tun We was only 7 months old when his father died.

U Mar Din was not happily married to Daw Khin Shein. He drank alcohol excessively, and she objected to this and openly said so. There does not appear to have been any other reason for marital disharmony.

I was able to meet one eyewitness (U Kyi) of U Mar Din's fatal accident and four other persons who reached its scene soon afterward and before U Mar Din was taken to the hospital. Their statements agreed in all important particulars. The accident occurred early one morning when U Mar Din and his assistant, U Kyi, were preparing to work on a building in the pagoda compound. U Mar Din suddenly saw a chance to raid the nests of some pigeons that had nested in the roof of one of the buildings. He climbed up to an area above the ceiling and under a pitched roof; then he walked along the ceiling beams toward the pigeons' nests. He must have stepped onto some thin and frail asbestos sheathing that provided a simple ceiling for the building, but could support no substantial weight. The asbestos board gave way, and U Mar Din fell through it to the cement pavement below. In 1977 I examined the site of the accident and estimated the distance of the fall as about 5 meters. Near where U Mar Din fell, a stone balustrade ran along the periphery of the pagoda building. It is possible that U Mar Din's head struck this balustrade on his way down.

After U Mar Din fell, there was blood around his head, and U Kyi said that he was also bleeding from the nose. Some informants said that he had injured his trunk as well, and one believed that he had broken his back in the fall. He was taken, still living, to the civil hospital at Mahlaing, where he died about 5 minutes after reaching it.

U Mar Din did not drink alcohol when working, and he was not intoxicated at the time of his accident.

He was about 40 years old when he died. U Win Maung and I fixed the date of his death with moderate precision by noting down the birth date of U Mar Din's youngest child, Maung Tun We. His horoscope gave his birth date as March 10, 1965. His mother, Daw Khin Shein, said that Maung Tun We was 7 months old when his father died. This would place U Mar Din's death sometime in October 1965.

Five informants all said that U Mar Din was injured on the head when he fell. They differed in the further details they gave about the injury to the head and about U Mar Din's other injuries.

U Kyi was on the scene at the pagoda when U Mar Din fell, and, although he did not actually see U Mar Din fall, he heard the noise of the fall. He must have reached U Mar Din within a few seconds after the accident. He said that U Mar Din had "one injury behind the right ear and his nose was bleeding. There was an injury also on the left side of the trunk."

U Ko Ko saw U Mar Din soon after the accident and before he was taken to the hospital. (He thought, incorrectly I think, that U Mar Din died instantly.) He said that he saw "injuries on the head. I also thought his hip was broken. The head was covered with congealed blood. I do not know exactly where he was hit."

Daw Main Galay, one of U Mar Din's assistants in masonry, rushed over to the pagoda when she heard about his accident. She said that when she reached him he was not yet dead, but died at the hospital. She remembered that "he was hit somewhere on the back of the head. The back of the head was covered with congealed blood."

Daw Khin Shein, U Mar Din's wife, also went to the pagoda when she heard that her husband had fallen down. She also remembered that he was still living when she reached him. She said he had been injured on the head. As she talked about the side of the head on which the injury was located, she said at first that the injury was on the left side of the head and gestured toward that side of her own head. However, as she continued talking, she changed to gesturing toward the right side of her head to indicate the location of the injury on her husband's head. I then intervened and suggested that perhaps she had meant earlier to say that the injury had occurred on the right side of the head. This did not force her opinion. Instead, she retreated and said simply that "there was blood all over the head" and that she "knew that the head had been injured." She saw her husband in the hospital later and noted that the doctors had stitched a wound on the right side of his head behind his ear. Daw Khin Shein said that "there had been an injury to the back also. The hip or flank looked disjointed." (She did not say on which side of the body this injury had occurred.)

Daw Ohn Khin, U Mar Din's older sister, reached her brother after his head had been bandaged and before he was taken to the hospital in Mahlaing. She said that he had a head injury, but a bandage (applied while he was still at the pagoda) prevented her from seeing where on his head he had been injured. From observing his body being lifted, she concluded that his back had been broken.[1]

[1]When I suggested to U Win Maung that we try to study the records of U Mar Din's admission to the hospital at Mahlaing, he advised me that the hospital would never permit a foreigner to examine them. He himself, not being a physician, had no professional qualifications for asking to examine the records. To the time of this writing we have never examined a medical record in Upper Burma, although in Rangoon we have done so. At the Rangoon General Hospital the record librarians have searched for records for us, and we obtained the records in the case of Ma Choe Hnin Htet (reported later in this work).

Statements and Recognitions Made by Maung Zaw Thein Lwin

In Table 5-1 I have listed the statements and recognitions that informants attributed to Maung Zaw Thein Lwin. The recognitions are proportionately more numerous, compared with the number of statements, than they are in most cases. I attribute this to Maung Zaw Thein Lwin's meeting the family of U Mar Din when he was quite young. He was not more than 5 at most when he met them and possibly 1 or even 2 years younger than that.[2] Daw Khin Shein said he was about 4 when she first met him.

Daw Khin Shein said that Maung Zaw Thein Lwin had recognized U Mar Din's masonry tools and also some of his clothes; but I did not obtain further details about the circumstances of these recognitions from her and therefore have not included them in Table 5-1.

Maung Zaw Thein Lwin's Statements about Events between U Mar Din's Death and His Birth. Maung Zaw Thein Lwin said that during the time when he was a discarnate person (after U Mar Din's death) he had to live in the precincts of the pagoda at Pan Aing.

He also described how he had become as small as a speck of dust and in this form had got into his mother's drinking water; but she had noticed the speck and thrown out the water. He then made himself even less visible and so had got into her when she drank the next water in which he had placed himself.[3]

Maung Zaw Thein Lwin said that during his discarnate phase he had appeared to Daw Khin Shein in a dream and told her where he had left 5 kyats wrapped up in a white handkerchief. Maung Zaw Thein Lwin wished to know whether Daw Khin Shein had had such a dream. However, as he was not feeling friendly toward her—I shall say more about his attitude toward her below—he asked Daw Ohn Khin (U Mar Din's older sister) to verify the occurrence of the dream for him. Daw Khin Shein told U Win Maung and me that she had indeed had such a dream and that it included the detail that the white handkerchief, in which the 5-kyat note was wrapped, was itself in a small box of basket work. These clues had enabled her to find the handkerchief and the 5-kyat note. The money itself was not important to her; but the verification of the instructions given ostensibly by the discarnate U Mar Din was. Daw Khin Shein said that Daw Ohn

[2]The case of Zouheir Chaar also had a high proportion of recognitions compared with statements. In that case also, the subject had met members of the previous family when he was a young child and before much time had elapsed during which he could make statements about the previous life.

[3]I have given elsewhere further information about the "speck of dust" in the Burmese concept of rebirth (Stevenson, 1983a).

Table 5-1 **Summary of Statements and Recognitions Made by Maung Zaw Thein Lwin**

Item	*Informants*	*Verification*	*Comments*
1. He was U Mar Din.	Daw Ohn Kyin, Maung Zaw Thein Lwin's mother Daw Nyunt, a neighbor of Daw Ohn Kyin	Daw Khin Shein, U Mar Din's wife	
2. He was from Pan Aing.	Daw Nyunt	Daw Khin Shein	
3. He had worked at the Pan Aing Monastery.	Daw Ohn Kyin	U Kyi, U Mar Din's assistant in masonry, Daw Main Galay, U Mar Din's assistant in masonry	
4. He was killled while bird's-nesting.	Daw Nyunt	U Kyi	
5. He had a head injury.	Daw Ohn Khin, U Mar Din's older sister Daw Ohn Kyin	U Kyi Daw Khin Shein Daw Ohn Khin U Ko Ko, retired headmaster of school at Pan Aing Daw Main Galay	Maung Zaw Thein Lwin made this remark when he first met Daw Ohn Khin.
6. He also broke his back.	Daw Ohn Khin Daw Ohn Kyin	Unverified	Several informants observed something apparently out of place in U Mar Din's trunk after he fell down. His sister, Daw Ohn Khin, thought that his back had been broken in the fall.

7.	Recognition of Maung Sein Tun, U Mar Din's older son	Daw Ohn Kyin Daw Ohn Khin Daw Khin Shein

Daw Ohn Kyin gave a variant version of this item. She heard Maung Zaw Thein Lwin say (on an occasion after he had mentioned U Mar Din's head injury): "I also got hurt on the waist."

Maung Zaw Thein Lwin recognized Maung Sein Tun by name when the latter first came with his mother, Daw Khin Shein, to meet Maung Zaw Thein Lwin at Htandaw village. Daw Ohn Kyin's two accounts of this recognition (given in interviews of 1975 and 1977) varied in their details, but not in her statement that Maung Zaw Thein Lwin had called Maung Sein Tun by his name when they first met. Daw Ohn Kyin said Maung Zaw Thein Lwin had not learned Maung Sein Tun's name earlier. Moreover, the villagers at Pan Aing called Maung Sein Tun by a nickname: "Pook Gyi."

According to Daw Ohn Kyin, she and her husband did not know that U Mar Din's family were bringing Maung Sein Tun, and they did not know his name before Maung Zaw Thein Lwin spoke it.

Daw Ohn Khin remembered that Maung Zaw Thein Lwin had called Maung Sein Tun by his given names. Daw Khin Shein did not recall (or did not mention) that Maung Zaw Thein Lwin had stated Maung Sein Tun's given

Table 5-1 *(continued)*

Item	*Informants*	*Verification*	*Comments*
			names. Instead she said that he had, ignoring her, called to Maung Sein Tun using words in Burmese that best translate as "Hey, boy." Hearing this, his (Maung Zaw Thein Lwin's) mother said to him reprovingly: "Why are you so rude? He is older than you." Maung Zaw Thein Lwin replied: "Why, he is my son. What does it matter?"
8. Recognition of Daw Ohn Khin, U Mar Din's older sister	Daw Ohn Khin		Daw Ohn Khin said that when she first met Maung Zaw Thein Lwin, he addressed her as *amma*, which means older sister in Burmese. This recognition occurred at Htandaw when members of U Mar Din's family first went there to meet Maung Zaw Thein Lwin.
9. Recognition of Daw Main Galay, one of U Mar Din's assistant masons	Daw Main Galay Daw Khin Shein		Daw Main Galay said that when she first met Maung Zaw Thein Lwin, he spontaneously called her "Ma Min." This was the name by which she was familiarly known and the one U Mar Din had used in addressing her. Daw Khin Shein said that when Maung Zaw Thein Lwin recognized Daw Main Galay, people in the group around him started weeping, and so did he.

10. Recognition of a wall that U Mar Din had built around a well in Pan Aing	Daw Ohn Kyin U Ko Ko	U Ko Ko	On a visit to Pan Aing, Maung Zaw Thein Lwin pointed to a wall around a well and said that he (as U Mar Din) had made it. U Ko Ko was a secondhand informant for this item. U Ko Ko confirmed to us that U Mar Din had built the wall that Maung Zaw Thein Lwin indicated.
11. Recognition of masonry lions made by U Mar Din	Daw Khin Shein		Maung Zaw Thein Lwin pointed out the masonry lions at the pagoda and said that he (in the previous life) had made them.
12. Recognition of place at the Pan Aing pagoda where U Mar Din had fallen	Daw Khin Shein		Daw Khin Shein said that Maung Zaw Thein Lwin spontaneously recognized the place where U Mar Din had fallen and fatally injured himself.

Khin had told her that Maung Zaw Thein Lwin had asked her about this dream. I did not obtain an account of it from Daw Ohn Khin herself.[4]

Maung Zaw Thein Lwin's Behavior Related to the Previous Life

Maung Zaw Thein Lwin's Attitude toward the Different Members of U Mar Din's Family. Maung Zaw Thein Lwin began to show an interest in Pan Aing when he was about 3 years old. He started pestering his grandmother to take him there. When he was weeping or crying for any reason, he would stop as soon as someone told him that he would be taken to Pan Aing.

When Maung Zaw Thein Lwin first met Daw Khin Shein, he did not greet her or speak to her initially, although he recognized Maung Sein Tun, her and U Mar Din's older son (item 7, Table 5-1). When, however, Daw Ohn Khin, who was present and whom Maung Zaw Thein Lwin had also recognized, assured Maung Zaw Thein Lwin that Daw Khin Shein had not remarried, he thawed and began talking with her. (I have given here Daw Khin Shein's account of her first meeting with Maung Zaw Thein Lwin; according to Daw Ohn Kyin, Maung Zaw Thein Lwin did not speak to Daw Khin Shein directly at all, but she may not have noticed his doing so, since they were among a somewhat large group of visitors.) We may say, therefore, that Maung Zaw Thein Lwin had recognized Daw Khin Shein tacitly by his aloof behavior toward her, in contrast with his cordiality toward other members of U Mar Din's family who came with her to Htandaw.[5]

Maung Zaw Thein Lwin showed great affection for Daw Ohn Khin. He used to bring rice to her. (I do not think she needed any rice; this was just his way of showing affection to her.) He said that when he grew up he would look after her. He was fond also of U Mar Din's other sisters. When they came to visit him, he wished to return to their homes with them, and when he heard about any illness among them, he would urge his parents to send him to them. They in turn gave Maung Zaw Thein Lwin gifts, including toys, clothes, and food.

When Maung Zaw Thein Lwin first met Maung Sein Tun (U Mar Din's older surviving son), he treated him familiarly and addressed him with Burmese words that we can best translate as "Hey, boy" (item 7 of Table 5-1). His mother

[4]In cases having announcing dreams or other dreams in which the concerned deceased person figures, the subjects rarely remember "sending" the dream. Maung Zaw Thein Lwin belongs to a small group of subjects who claim to have remembered the dream as from the period as a discarnate personality. Other examples occurred in the cases of the Ven. U Sobhana and Maung Yin Maung. In Maung Yin Maung's case, the discarnate personality manifested both in dreams and as an apparition seen by Maung Yin Maung's mother.

[5]Other examples of subjects who discriminated in their attitudes between persons with whom the concerned previous personality had been friendly and those with whom he (or she) had had a poor relationship occurred in the cases of Gnanatilleka Baddewithana, Gamini Jayasena, Lalitha Abeyawardena, Disna Samarasinghe, Pushpa, Ma Khin Sandi, Sunita Singh, Navalkishore Yadav, and Ratana Wongsombat.

rebuked him for speaking rudely to an older person, but Maung Zaw Thein Lwin replied: "Why, he is my son. What does it matter?" (At this meeting Maung Zaw Thein Lwin was between 3 and 4 years old, Maung Sein Tun between 15 and 16.)

Sometime after the two families had met, Maung Zaw Thein Lwin went over to Daw Ohn Khin's house in Mahlaing. She was out, and he enquired where she was. He was informed that she had gone to Pan Aing to visit Maung Sein Tun, who was ill. He asked to be taken to Pan Aing so he could see Maung Sein Tun. Maung Sein Tun later died, and Maung Zaw Thein Lwin went back to Pan Aing, where he was observed weeping with grief. After 2 or 3 hours his mother brought him back to Htandaw.

According to Daw Ohn Kyin, Maung Zaw Thein Lwin continued to be "not on very friendly terms" with Daw Khin Shein. Although I did not confirm this from other informants, such distant behavior on the part of Maung Zaw Thein Lwin toward Daw Khin Shein would have accorded with the rather unhappy relationship U Mar Din had had with his wife.

Maung Zaw Thein Lwin's Attitude toward U Mar Din's Work and Projects. When Maung Zaw Thein Lwin first went to U Mar Din's house and saw the deteriorated condition of the shrine in the house, he remarked: "It is in disrepair because I am not here." Daw Ohn Kyin reported this statement, but was a secondhand informant for it, because she did not go with Maung Zaw Thein Lwin on his first visit to Pan Aing.

When Maung Zaw Thein Lwin met the abbot of the Pan Aing Monastery, he made a remark similar to the one he had made earlier at U Mar Din's house. He said: "There is a lot of damage and deterioration in the work I did, because I was no longer here."

Maung Zaw Thein Lwin's Interest in Alcohol. Maung Zaw Thein Lwin showed a precocious appetite for alcohol. His family provided no model for this behavior; his mother never took alcohol, and his father was in principle a teetotaler, although he occasionally took a social drink. When Maung Zaw Thein Lwin first asked for alcohol, his parents rebuked him, and he stopped asking for it in their presence. But Daw Ohn Kyin was aware that young men of the village had surreptitiously given Maung Zaw Thein Lwin alcohol.

Maung Zaw Myint Lwin (Maung Zaw Thein Lwin's older brother) gave a fuller account of Maung Zaw Thein Lwin's indulgence in alcohol. He said that Maung Zaw Thein Lwin had stolen alcohol from places where he knew it was kept, had drunk it secretly, and had then become intoxicated. In this condition he had abused and molested other persons, including his brothers, playmates, and his foster grandfather. In 1977 one of the family's neighbors was still sharing alcohol with Maung Zaw Thein Lwin.[6]

[6]In a footnote for the case of Nirankar Bhatnagar I listed some other subjects who as children showed a craving for an intoxicant substance which matched a habit or addiction on the part of the person whose life the child remembered.

Maung Zaw Thein Lwin especially liked a fruit called *duyin* (or *durian*) of which U Mar Din had been fond.

Other Observations of Maung Zaw Thein Lwin's Behavior. Maung Zaw Thein Lwin had no phobia of being in high places, such as up in trees, from which he might fall. Indeed, his intrepidity in climbing trees and going into tall buildings rather alarmed his mother.

Maung Zaw Thein Lwin's Birthmark

When Maung Zaw Thein Lwin was born, the birthmark shown in Figure 5-1 was discharging. It continued to suppurate until Maung Zaw Thein Lwin was 6 years old. Daw Ohn Kyin attributed its eventual healing to a folk ritual she carried out after consulting an elderly woman.

My notes of 1977 state that the birthmark was then about 2.5 centimeters in diameter, hairless, having increased pigmentation, and not elevated from the surrounding skin. It had the puckered appearance of a scar from an acquired wound. It seemed to me that the appearance of Maung Zaw Thein Lwin's birthmark changed little between the time when I first examined it in November 1975 and March 1980, when I last saw it. I took the photograph of Figure 5-1 in November 1975, when Maung Zaw Thein Lwin was 7½ years old.

Maung Zaw Thein Lwin said (in 1980) that he sometimes felt pain in the area of his birthmark, but not especially when he talked about the previous life. He also said that he sometimes had headaches, which he localized at the front of his head, but he thought these occurred when he had been in the hot sun too long.

Comments on the Evidence of Paranormal Processes in the Case

The two families concerned in this case were acquainted before its development, and Maung Zaw Thein Lwin's statements about the previous life included few details unknown to members of his family.

Maung Zaw Thein Lwin's birthmark is undoubtedly the most unusual feature of the case. I consider the evidence of its correspondence with a wound on U Mar Din's head satisfactory, although not conclusive, because the informants for his injuries gave inexact and sometimes discrepant statements; they agreed that U Mar Din had received a major head injury, but differed concerning the precise location of the injury. The medical records we did not see might have resolved these doubts.

At the same time uncertainties about exactly where on his head U Mar Din was wounded cannot relieve us of the obligation to think of *some* cause for the birthmark at the back of Maung Zaw Thein Lwin's head. We can fall back on attributing it to chance by saying that Maung Zaw Thein Lwin "just happened" to be born with this birthmark; noticing it, his family then looked around for a person who had died of a head injury, settled on U Mar Din, and imposed an identifi-

cation with him on Maung Zaw Thein Lwin. An interpretation following this line of reasoning could be made for many other cases also, and I will defer discussing it until after I have presented reports of more cases.

Maung Zaw Thein Lwin's Later Development

As I mentioned earlier, Maung Zaw Thein Lwin talked a little with us in 1980. He was not affable, however, and we had to ask him direct and even leading questions in order to elicit answers.

He was progressing in school and preparing to enter the fifth grade when classes resumed.

He said that he still remembered some details of the previous life, such as that he had been a mason and that he had died when he fell from the ceiling of a building where he was bird's-nesting. He also remembered being taken to the hospital in a fire engine and that he had died in the hospital. These last details were correct for the life of U Mar Din. However, they had not figured in informants' reports of statements Maung Zaw Thein Lwin had made when younger.

THE CASE OF YVONNE EHRLICH

Summary of the Case and Its Investigation

Yvonne Ehrlich was born on September 11, 1953, in São Paulo, Brazil. She was born postmaturely. She was the only child of her parents, Roberto Ehrlich and his wife, Erika. Yvonne, however, had three stepsiblings, the children of her father's first marriage. Roberto Ehrlich was a textile technician. Yvonne's parents were both born in Vienna during the 1920s. They emigrated from Austria to Brazil in the late 1940s, but I do not know exactly when.

About 12 or 13 days before Yvonne's birth, her maternal grandmother, Leopoldine Suk, had a dream in which she saw her deceased sister, Martha Demmer, bending over her son-in-law. This led her to predict that her daughter would have a female baby who would be the reincarnation of Martha. She also predicted that the birth would take place on September 11, which was Martha's birthday.

When Yvonne was born, she had two birthmarks on her head (one of which is shown in Figure 5-2) that corresponded with fatal wounds on Martha, who had died in Vienna in 1944 during a bombing raid on that city. Yvonne later made a single statement in which she said that she was Leopoldine Suk's sister. She also showed some behavior unusual for other members of her immediate family, but in which she resembled Martha. The data of the case are therefore meager, and the identification of Yvonne as the reincarnation of her great-aunt depends on a single dream, two birthmarks, a single statement by Yvonne, and some correspondences of behavior between Yvonne and her great-aunt.

Figure 5-2 Photograph of the back of the head of Yvonne Ehrlich in September 1969, when she was 16 years old. The birthmark was an approximately round area of erythema, which was about 4 centimeters in diameter.

Leopoldine Suk thought the case worth putting into written form, and she wrote a letter in which she described the relevant details known to her. This was published in June 1968 in a German magazine *Die andere Welt* that specialized in popular articles related to paranormal phenomena.

When I read this article, I thought the case deserved further study. I obtained Leopoldine Suk's address and wrote her (in September 1968), but received no reply. I then asked Hernani Guimarães Andrade, who lived in São Paulo and who assisted me with other cases in Brazil, if he could trace Leopoldine Suk and learn more details about the case. After some difficulty he found the family only to learn that Leopoldine Suk had died on January 26, 1969. She had, however, stated what she knew about the case in her letter to *Die andere Welt*. Hernani Andrade interviewed Yvonne and her parents and sent me a report of what he had learned about the case from them. Later, in 1970, he obtained further statements from Yvonne's parents concerning her birthmarks.

With the permission of Yvonne's mother, I wrote to her cousin Hermann Demmer in Vienna and asked him to tell me what he remembered about how his mother had died and the wounds observed on her body. He sent a comprehensive reply to these questions.

In February 1972 I met Yvonne and her mother at their home in São Paulo; and at that time I obtained some further information and clarifications of details previously recorded.

I have not met Yvonne since 1972. However, on December 11, 1981, Hernani Andrade (on my behalf) had a long interview with Yvonne's parents and was able to obtain some answers to questions I put about details of the case.

The Life, Death, and Character of Martha Demmer

Martha Dremml Demmer was born in Vienna on September 11, 1900. Her younger sister, Leopoldine, was born in 1903. Martha grew up and lived all her life in Vienna. She married twice and had at least one child, her son Hermann (with whom I corresponded). She held toward the end of her life the position of chief secretary in a large insurance company.

I said earlier that Erika Ehrlich had emigrated from Austria to Brazil. She had, however, known her aunt well in Vienna and later remembered some of her outstanding characteristics. According to her, Martha Demmer was a sociable and popular person, liked by everyone. She was fond of dancing and enjoyed music greatly, but could not play any instrument. She also liked the sea and swimming. Her favorite food was chicken, and she had a habit of seasoning her food with paprika. She tended to be a severe and outspoken critic of other people. She was untidy with her personal property and left her clothes lying around her room carelessly. However, she used to dress well and in good taste. In her hours of daily activity she was an "owl," getting up late and going to bed late.

Toward the end of 1944 Vienna suffered from what appeared to its inhabitants to be almost uninterrupted bombing attacks, mainly by the bombers of the United States Air Force. During these bombing raids Martha, like other members of her family, used to take shelter in what seemed like a safe section of the basement of the apartment building where she lived.

On November 5, 1944, when the sirens sounded, she went to the basement along with some other persons, including her 17-year-old son, Hermann. I next quote from his letter to me of June 16, 1970 (which I have translated from the German):

> About 15 to 20 minutes later [after they had gone to the basement] we heard bomb explosions some distance away, and then immediately afterward I received an invisible blast of air that threw me 10-15 meters along the basement corridor. My mother, who was standing right beside me, was slung by the same blast into a room, which immediately became blocked up. After I regained consciousness, I and other survivors worked our way through the debris and found my mother. She still had some signs of life, but died shortly afterward.

The London *Times* of November 6, 1944, reported for November 5 "heavy bombers of the 15th Air Force today attacked targets in the Vienna area." The despatch came from "Allied Headquarters, Italy." It furnished no other details.

The Wounds on Martha's Head. At the time I obtained permission from Yvonne's parents to write to Hermann Demmer, I fumbled an opportunity to have from him a statement about his mother's wounds before he knew the location of

Yvonne's birthmarks. I failed to advise Erika Ehrlich not to tell her cousin anything about Yvonne's birthmarks. Without this restriction it was understandable for her, when she wrote her cousin to notify him that he could expect a letter from me, also to tell him about Yvonne's case, including her birthmarks. She even sent Hermann Demmer a copy of her mother's article in *Die andere Welt*, which mentioned the location of both of Yvonne's birthmarks. (Erika Ehrlich subsequently let me have copies of her correspondence with Hermann Demmer.) This leaves open the possibility that Hermann Demmer harmonized his memories of his mother's wounds to accord with his cousin's report of Yvonne's birthmarks.[7]

I next quote the passage from Hermann Demmer's letter that immediately followed the one I cited above:

> My mother's face was covered with blood, but I can remember that she had a large wound on the left side of the forehead near the temple. I just held my mother's hand and did not trust myself to do anything else. A medical doctor whom we knew, and who lived in the same apartment building, came to where we were. He wanted to help, but all he could do was pronounce my mother dead. The danger of a further collapse of the building made it necessary to get my mother's body immediately out of the blocked up place where it was. As we were doing this, I noticed for the first time an appalling wound at the back of my mother's head. This extended over the entire back of the head, so that I cannot really give a more precise location. I did not notice any other wounds, nor was I later told about any others.

Hermann Demmer was the only family member who observed his mother's wounds. He had later told his aunt Leopoldine about the wounds, and she had told her daughter, Yvonne's mother, Erika Ehrlich. Erika was in Vienna at the time of her aunt's death. She learned about this on the same day, and she attended her aunt's funeral. She did not, however, see her aunt's body.

An Announcing Dream

In 1953 Leopoldine Suk journeyed from Vienna to São Paulo to join her daughter, Erika. When she arrived in São Paulo, Erika told her mother that she was expecting a baby. The calculated date for Erika's delivery came and passed without any signs of her going into labor. The waiting family became uneasy. When 2 weeks had passed beyond the expected date of delivery, Leopoldine had the following dream, the account of which I have taken and translated from her letter to *Die andere Welt*.

[7]As will be seen, however, Hermann Demmer's memory of where the wound on the front of his mother's head had been did not agree exactly with the memories of Yvonne's parents concerning the location of the (faded) birthmark on her forehead. The correspondence was close, but not exact.

> I saw my beloved sister Martha standing next to my son-in-law. He was sitting in a comfortable armchair. She bent down toward him and then seemed to flow as it were. She seemed to flow into the floor.
>
> Early next morning I told my daughter: "Do you know when your baby girl will be born? It will be September 11th."
>
> When my daughter asked me how I could be so certain that she would have a girl and what the date of her birth would be, I told her about the glimpse I had had and reminded her that my sister's birthday had been September 11th.

Erika Ehrlich said that her mother had this dream about 12 or 13 days before Yvonne's birth. Her mother told her about the dream the day after having it.

No other member of the family had a dream related to Yvonne's birth.

The Statement Made by Yvonne

Yvonne was about 7 years old when she made her single statement referring to the previous life. She had been sulky and obstinate one day, and her grandmother (Leopoldine Suk) became exasperated with her and said: "Surely you ought to treat me with more respect, since I am, after all, your grandmother." To this Yvonne replied: "What do you mean 'grandmother'? You are my sister." Startled by this riposte, Leopoldine Suk said: "What are you saying?" But Yvonne could not or would not repeat the remark. It is more likely that she would not repeat it, because she told me in 1972 that she remembered having made it. So also did her mother, who told Hernani Andrade about the incident in 1970. Erika Ehrlich recalled variant wording for what Yvonne had said to her grandmother and remembered that she had said she was her grandmother's *older* sister.

When Yvonne was 4 years old, her parents took her to Vienna, but she made no statements about the previous life while there and appeared to have no sense of recognizing anything there. She was not, however, taken to the part of Vienna where Martha Demmer had lived.

At the times when Hernani Andrade and I talked with Yvonne (in 1969 and 1972), she said that she remembered nothing of the previous life.

Yvonne's Behavior Related to the Previous Life

Yvonne had a phobia for airplanes, but only when she was outdoors, not when she was in the house. (This is the reverse of what we might have expected in view of Martha Demmer's having been killed while she was inside a building.)

She had no antagonism toward Americans.

She had a number of traits in which she was judged somewhat or markedly unusual in her family. (These traits corresponded to those I mentioned earlier in delineating Martha Demmer's character.) In making her appraisal of Yvonne's personality, Erika Ehrlich was able to compare Yvonne with Yvonne's older stepsiblings.

Yvonne was sociable. She was also musical and had a notable talent for music; in addition to playing the piano, she was active in classical ballet dancing. Her favorite food was chicken, and she liked to season her food with paprika. She was outspokenly critical of other persons and extremely untidy with regard to her clothes, which she would leave lying around in her room for as long as a month before finally tidying them up. She was not, however, careless of her personal appearance. In her waking activity she was an "owl," rising late and going to bed late. She was fond of the sea and other bodies of water and enjoyed swimming.

Yvonne's Birthmarks

Yvonne's parents said that they noticed two birthmarks on her head almost immediately after her birth, and certainly before her mother left the maternity hospital where she was born. Both marks were approximately round areas of erythema.

Figure 5-2 shows the appearance in 1969 of the birthmark, an area of erythema, at the back of Yvonne's head.[8] Its center was slightly to the right of the midline. It was approximately round in shape and about 4 centimeters in diameter. Erika Ehrlich said that the birthmark at the back of Yvonne's head was more visible on some days than on others, but I did not learn whether she had found these changes related to some possibly causative factor. On the day when I examined the birthmark it was fainter than it appears to be in Figure 5-2.

I have no photograph of the birthmark on the front of Yvonne's forehead because it began to fade when she was between 6 and 8 months old, and it had completely disappeared by the time she was a year old. In appearance and size it resembled the birthmark at the back of the head.

[8]Small areas of erythema at the back of the neck occur transiently in many babies, without known cause. These areas, often called "salmon patches," are a type of nevus flammeus (Solomon and Esterly, 1973). (They may also be referred to as capillary hemangiomas [O'Doherty, 1979] and nuchal nevi [Øster and Nielsen, 1970].) Their reported incidence has varied widely in different series. Corson (1934) found the abnormality in only 3% of 210 newborn infants in Philadelphia; Jacobs and Walton (1976) found it in 32% (of 1,058 newborn infants in California); Pratt (1953) found it in 42% of 1,096 infants in New Jersey; and Bossard (1918) found it in 50% of 330 newborn infants of Zurich, Switzerland. All these data derive from the examination of Caucasian and Negro children, although the California series included some babies of Asian origin. The wide variation in the reported incidence of the condition almost certainly derives more from differences in the criteria of what should be considered abnormal than from differences in the actual incidence of the condition.

The erythema, due to dilation of superficial capillaries in the dermis, tends to disappear as the child grows, although in 5% of cases it persists into later childhood and beyond (Hodgman, Freeman, and Levan, 1971).

The site of Yvonne's birthmark is therefore an unsuitable one from which to argue that a birthmark there has some special origin, for example, that it might derive from a previous life. Nevertheless, this book endeavors to challenge the idea of coincidence as applied to birthmarks and suggests that we may ultimately learn why one particular baby has an area of redness on its neck and another does not.

Nuchal "salmon patches" occurred also in the cases of Navalkishore Yadav and Ma Choe Hnin Htet (included later in this work).

Yvonne's parents (in 1970) remembered that the birthmark on the front of her head had been high up on her forehead at the midline below the hairline. Leopoldine Suk, in her letter to *Die andere Welt* 2 years earlier, had simply described this birthmark as being "on the forehead," without giving it a more precise location. (It had seemingly not been at exactly the same place—to the left of the forehead, near the temple—where Hermann Demmer remembered the wound on the front of his mother's head to have been.)

The birthmarks were not tender to touch, and Yvonne had never complained of any pain in the areas of the birthmarks. As a young child she did not suffer from headaches, but after the age of 10, and up to the time I met her in 1972, she had had headaches.

Yvonne had one other congenital anomaly, which I shall mention, although I do not know of any connection between it and Martha Demmer. She developed pyloric stenosis 6 weeks after her birth, and this was operated on successfully. At the age of 1 she developed a small tumor of the left outer ear. This was successfully treated with radiation. In all other respects her health had been excellent up to 1972.

THE CASE OF MAHMUT EKİCİ

Introduction

The subject of this case was 44 years old when Reşat Bayer and I met him (in 1967) and recorded a long statement from him about his memories of a previous life. Because the case was old when we studied it, some potential informants for the case had died or were unavailable. However, we were able to meet three persons additional to the subject, and they contributed information that I consider reliable, even though there were discrepancies among some of the different statements they made.

Because the two personalities concerned in the case were cousins, informants for the subject could also furnish information about the man whose life he claimed to remember.

Summary of the Case and Its Investigation

Mahmut Ekici was born in Havutlu, near Adana, Turkey, in July 1923. His parents were Mikail Ekici and his wife, Fatma. Their family eventually had six sons and three daughters, but I did not learn Mahmut's order of birth among them. The family were Alevis and considered themselves Arabs. When he grew up, Mahmut Ekici became a farmer, and in 1967 he was prospering at this occupation.

Mahmut Ekici was born with a prominent birthmark (Figure 5-3), which I shall describe later. Soon after his birth his mother had two dreams which, together with Mahmut's birthmark, led her to believe that he was the reincarnation of a

Figure 5-3 Birthmark on upper abdomen of Mahmut Ekici as it appeared in October 1967, when he was 44 years old. The subject pulled up his shirt just before the photograph was taken. In doing so he stretched the skin of the area of the birthmark. This made the birthmark appear larger in area and less deep beneath the surrounding skin than it was with the skin unstretched.

man called Mahmut Namik who had been stabbed to death some time before Mahmut Ekici's birth. He was Fatma's first cousin.

Mahmut Ekici's mother said that when he was about 2 years old, he began to talk about the life of Mahmut Namik. Mahmut Ekici also showed a great fondness for Mahmut Namik's mother, and he spent much time at her house during his childhood.

I first learned of this case in October 1967, when I was at Havutlu investigating other cases. At that time Reşat Bayer and I tape-recorded a long statement by Mahmut Ekici. We also interviewed his mother, Fatma (who was an elderly lady of 75); Mikail Ekici had died by 1967. We were also able to interview a neighbor, Müyesser Demirbaş.

In 1970 Reşat Bayer and I wished to interview Mahmut Ekici again, but he took umbrage over our failure to send him a gift after our first interview and would not cooperate further. However, we were able in that year to meet and interview Mahmut's older sister, Emine Çalişkan.

Persons Interviewed during the Investigation

At Havutlu, Adana, I interviewed:

Mahmut Ekici

Fatma Ekici, Mahmut Ekici's mother

Emine Çalişkan, Mahmut Ekici's older sister
Müyesser Demirbaş, villager

Emine Çalişkan was 13 years older than Mahmut Ekici and well qualified to speak about events during his childhood as well as about Mahmut Namik. However, she could not speak Turkish well, and we needed an Arabic-speaking interpreter in talking with her.

A potentially valuable informant, Zarife Namik, who was Mahmut Namik's mother, had died by the time we investigated the case.

Relevant Facts of Geography and Other Background Information

Mahmut Namik was a first cousin of Fatma Ekici's mother. His family also lived in Havutlu, the village where Mahmut Ekici was born, grew up, and lived. Havutlu is about 10 kilometers south of Adana. The two families were not only related; they were apparently well acquainted. With one exception that I shall mention later, it is unlikely that Mahmut said anything verifiable about the previous life that his family did not already know. He did make some statements about the circumstances of Mahmut Namik's death concerning matters unknown to them; but these were unverifiable.

The Death of Mahmut Namik

After the defeat of the Ottoman Turkish Empire during the First World War, France occupied the regions of Cilicia (the area around Adana) and Hatay (see Appendix A). Under the Treaty of Lausanne in 1923, France withdrew from Cilicia while continuing to occupy Hatay (as part of Syria) until 1939.

Mahmut Namik died during the period of the French occupation of Adana, and so we know that his death occurred sometime between 1919 and 1923. Mahmut Ekici said that it occurred in 1921, and this may be correct, although I have not verified it.

Unfortunately, I have little other independently verified information about Mahmut Namik. The Turks engaged in partisan warfare against the French during the French occupation of Adana. Mahmut Namik became involved in this and was killed during it; but I am uncertain whether he was himself a partisan Turkish soldier fighting the French (as Mahmut Ekici suggested from his memories) or was simply a victim of a personal quarrel which the partisan fighting conveniently masked.

Mahmut Ekici's older sister Emine Çalişkan, who was about 11 years old at the time, said that the family learned "the truth" about Mahmut Namik's death only a year after it occurred. Probably her information derived from careless talk on the part of the persons concerned, because there was no identified eyewitness of Mahmut Namik's death, and his body was not found until 4 months after his disappearance. Emine said that another Arab who had become a French citizen was jealous of Mahmut Namik and was able to kill him while accompanied by French soldiers, who assisted him or at least permitted the murder.

When Mahmut Namik's body was eventually discovered, it had become extensively decomposed, and Emine Çalişkan said it was little more than a skeleton. This naturally raises the question of how anyone could say where on his body Mahmut Namik received his fatal stab wound. Emine Çalişkan and Fatma Ekici were our only two witnesses on that important point.

Fatma Ekici said that she had attended the funeral of her cousin. This might have put her in a good position to see his body, including its wound, or to learn about the location of the wound from a reliable firsthand informant. She indicated that Mahmut Namik's wound was on the left side of his abdomen. (She gestured to indicate the site and was not more precise in words.) To my regret later, I did not learn on what evidence Fatma Ekici based her statement about the wound's location.

Emine Çalişkan at first recalled that her brother Mahmut had said that he was stabbed on the right side in the region of his liver. Then she seemed to realize that this was unsatisfactory evidence concerning where Mahmut Namik had been stabbed. After thinking further about the matter, she remembered that Mahmut Namik's mother had preserved the shirt he wore when he was killed. (His mortified body had presumably been identified by the clothes attached to it.) Mahmut's shirt had become an important keepsake—almost a sacred relic—for his mother, Zarife. When it came her turn to die, she was buried with the remnants of her son's shirt. Emine Çalişkan told us that she had seen this shirt and that it had a hole in the part that would cover the liver. Emine's testimony on the location of the wound that killed Mahmut Namik was by no means as strong as I should have wished; but I considered it strong enough to justify my classifying this case among those in which I have independently verified the location of a wound on the previous personality that corresponds with the site of the subject's birthmark.

Mahmut Ekici said that Mahmut Namik was between 18 and 20 when he was killed, but I did not verify this information independently.

Two Announcing Dreams

For some days after his birth Mahmut Ekici cried incessantly. Fatma Ekici, exasperated by this crying, grumbled to God, saying: "What a boy you have given me." After this declaration the baby stopped crying, but then she dreamed that the baby spoke to her and, communicating somehow that he was Mahmut Namik, said: "I left all my loved ones in order to come to you, and you are complaining about me." The dream then ended.

Five days later, Fatma Ekici had a second dream. In this one Mahmut Namik appeared in his adult form as when he was alive. He said: "Tell my mother not to cry any more because I am coming to you."[9]

[9]Other cases in which a previous personality communicated—usually in a dream—after the birth of a subject later having that person's memories include: Marta Lorenz, Cevriye Bayrı, Ali Uğurlu, Pratima Saxena, Patricia Fairley, Semir Taci, Navalkishore Yadav, and Süleyman Zeytun.

Statements Made by Mahmut Ekici

According to Mahmut Ekici's mother, he gave the following account of Mahmut Namik's death when he was about 3 years old. He said that Mahmut Namik was a partisan who one day went with some companions to a farm owned by a family called Madama, which they found deserted. (From this point Mahmut Ekici seemed to be recalling minute details.) They discovered some large bowls full of honey which they consumed. Afterward they felt thirsty and looked for water. They found a well and descended into it to drink. (One has to imagine that the bucket of the well had been removed when the farm had been abandoned.) As they came up from the well, some "enemy soldiers" (presumably French) discovered them and attacked them.

Emine Çalişkan said that Mahmut had said he was stabbed with a dagger by a man called Yusuf Sakkur. By words or gesture or both, Mahmut indicated that he had been stabbed in the upper abdomen in the region of the liver.

Mahmut Ekici said that he remembered some events that occurred after Mahmut Namik's death. In particular, he said that his body (of the previous life) was first covered with mulberry leaves and then, later, with straw. (I could not verify the first of these two statements, but Fatma Ekici said that Mahmut Namik's body *was* covered with straw when it was buried.)

My other informants mentioned several other statements that Mahmut Ekici made when he was a small child which one or other of them had verified. For example, he said that he had had a moustache in the previous life and had used some cosmetic preparation for managing it. When Mahmut Ekici went to Mahmut Namik's house, he became annoyed when he learned that someone else had been using the preparation Mahmut Namik applied to his moustache.

When Mahmut Ekici was 3 years old, the time came for his circumcision. For the role of *kirve* (sponsor) for the circumcision ceremony, his family chose a man who seemed appropriate to them. Mahmut protested, saying: "Why did you choose him? He is my brother." The man in question was in fact Mahmut Namik's brother.[10]

On another occasion, when Mahmut Ekici was 4 or 5 years old, he spontaneously asked Müyesser Demirbaş: "Where is the boy on whose head I put a rosary?" This rather odd remark evidently referred to the occasion when Mahmut Namik had been selected as the kirve for a circumcision of Müyesser Demirbaş's son; and as a part of the ceremony for this ritual he had put a rosary on the boy's head.

Mahmut Ekici's most impressive verified statement concerned a dagger that Mahmut Namik had buried. Someone suggested to him that in the previous life he

[10]The kirve for a boy's circumcision is ordinarily a close friend of the boy's father. It would be inappropriate to ask the boy's own brother to act as kirve. The incident shows Mahmut Ekici's strong identification with Mahmut Namik.

must have had a dagger somewhere. (This was an appropriate question, because the partisans fighting the French usually had daggers among their few weapons.) Mahmut said he had hidden a dagger under a pomegranate tree. He repeated this statement often enough so that, according to his mother, some of the villagers eventually went to the place he indicated, dug the earth up, and found a dagger there. Fatma Ekici said that she herself (and other members of the family) had not actually seen the dagger. The reports of the villagers who had found it presumably satisfied them. Emine Çalişkan confirmed that her brother had correctly indicated a place under a pomegranate tree where a dagger was dug out. She remembered—contrary to her mother's statement—that she and Mahmut Namik's mother were witnesses of the digging up of the dagger, and were "the only persons present." I presume that she meant to add—and possibly did add without my recording it—that they were the only members of the family present. The villagers who did the actual digging up of the dagger were obviously "persons present." Of greater importance is Emine's statement that no one living—including herself and Mahmut Namik's mother—knew that Mahmut Namik had buried a knife at the place where they dug this one up.

Mahmut Ekici's Statements in 1967. In 1967 Mahmut Ekici talked as if he still preserved clear memories of the previous life. He remembered, for example, that he had been engaged to marry a girl called Zehra at the time he was killed. He seemed to have forgotten the family name of Mahmut Namik, but remembered his first name and also the name of Mahmut Namik's father, Ahmet.[11] He remembered details of how the first Mahmut had been killed, and said that "enemy soldiers" were involved and that one had held him by the arms and shoulders while another stabbed him.

Since Mahmut Ekici could easily have learned normally during his childhood much about the life of Mahmut Namik, I shall not repeat further statements he made to us in 1967. However, I shall mention a recognition he said that he had made as a young child. I did not verify this independently with his mother; she did not mention it spontaneously, and I failed to ask her about it. Nevertheless, it deserves mention because it shows Mahmut Ekici's strong identification with the previous personality. According to Mahmut, he was walking one day with his mother in Havutlu when they passed a vegetable garden. He said that he would like to pick an onion from the garden and eat it. Then he remarked, more or less casually, that the garden belonged to his father. His mother, astonished, asked him what gave him the idea that his father owned this particular garden. To this he

[11]Surnames were only introduced in Turkey in 1935 and their use spread slowly, especially among the poorly assimilated Arabic-speaking persons of south central Turkey. Before surnames were adopted, a man would be known by his given name and that of his father. (See Appendix A.) These facts make less surprising Mahmut Ekici's forgetting of Mahmut Namik's family name, even though the two families lived in the same village and Mahmut Ekici had maintained contact with Mahmut Namik's mother until he was a young man.

replied that he was the son of Bekçi[12] Ahmet. Mahmut Ekici said (in 1967) that these remarks were his first statements about the previous life. He thought he was 3 or 4 years old at the time.

Mahmut Ekici's Behavior Related to the Previous Life

I learned of only one important feature of Mahmut Ekici's behavior related to the previous life. This was his strong attachment to Mahmut Namik's mother, Zarife. He said that he preferred her to his mother. Although Mahmut Ekici did not say why he preferred Mahmut Namik's mother to his own, his older sister Emine furnished a motive of which he himself had later become ashamed. She said that Mahmut frequently complained tearfully about being less prosperous in his family than he remembered having been among the Namiks. He himself remembered that there was a lot of milk and butter at the home of the previous family.

For whatever reason, Mahmut spent much time during his childhood with Zarife. He told us that he might have "lived with her" for as long as 10 years. However, Emine Çalişkan did not confirm that he had stayed so long with the Namiks. She said that Mahmut had indeed spent a great deal of time with Zarife. Sometimes he would spend 2 or 3 days at her house at a time; then his family would go and bring him back to their house. She said, however, that he never actually moved over to Zarife's house. (That he later came to think that he had done so perhaps derives from the strong attachment he had to Zarife and the pleasure he later remembered having in her company.)

We can acknowledge Mahmut Ekici's strong attachment to Zarife without believing that it arose only in the life he claimed to remember. He said that his remembering the cosmetic preparation Mahmut Namik had used to improve his moustache had greatly impressed Zarife; and she was even more impressed when he correctly stated the name of Mahmut Namik's fiancée: Zehra. Thereafter, Zarife cosseted Mahmut Ekici in a manner to which he may not have been accustomed in his own home. The abundance of good milk and butter must have made the Namik home additionally attractive to him.

When he was a young man, Mahmut Ekici broke with the previous family under the following circumstances. One of his sisters married a member of Mahmut Namik's family who subsequently died. Mahmut Namik's family then put her out of her husband's house. Mahmut Ekici found this an intolerable unkindness and refused thereafter to visit Zarife, who had owned the house from which his sister had been ejected. This rupture of amicable relations greatly distressed Zarife, who said she would die of chagrin if she did not see Mahmut Ekici, and not long afterward she did die. I have only Mahmut Ekici's account of these

[12]*Bekçi* means watchman in Turkish. In the days before Kemal Atatürk obliged every Turk to take a family name (in 1935), few Turks had family names, and many were known by their vocations. I found this still true to some extent during my investigations in Turkey. Raşit Tatlıçı, an informant for the case of İsmail Altınkılıç, provided another example. *Tatlıçı* means a maker of desserts.

events, but this minimally shows that Mahmut Ekici believed that Zarife fully accepted him as her murdered son reborn.

Mahmut Ekici's Birthmark

Fatma Ekici said that Mahmut's birthmark (Figure 5-3) was bleeding and oozing when he was born. At first she said that the birthmark discharged for a month; then she allowed her son (who was present at my interview with her) to correct her and extend to a year the remembered duration of the discharge before the wound healed. Mahmut's older sister Emine Çalişkan compromised and said that the birthmark bled for 2 months.

Figure 5-3 shows the location of Mahmut Ekici's birthmark crossing the midline of the upper abdomen. However, the photograph does not show the usual depth of the birthmark. Just before the photograph was taken, Mahmut Ekici pulled up his shirt and with it the skin above the birthmark. This had the effect of extending the area of the birthmark and also making it appear more shallow than it was when the skin was not pulled upward. In its natural condition, the birthmark was smaller in area than Figure 5-3 shows it to be; but it was also appreciably deeper. It was at least 2 or 3 millimeters deep and appeared almost as if someone had chiseled out a rectangular area from the skin and underlying tissues of the abdomen.

Other Medical Information. After the drainage from the birthmark ceased, whenever that was, Mahmut Ekici continued to have some discomfort in its region, and this continued into his adulthood. He sometimes felt a pain there. This occurred especially after he had worked hard and become tired. He felt the pain rather deep within the abdomen, not superficially at the level of the birthmark on the skin. He had never suffered from jaundice.

THE CASE OF SOM PIT HANCHAROEN

Summary of the Case and Its Investigation

Som Pit Hancharoen was born at Sa Kla, Amphur[13] Prapadaing (about 30 kilometers south of Bangkok), Thailand, on November 3, 1939. His parents were Hae Hancharoen and his wife, Look Chan. Hae Hancharoen was a Thai and Look Chan was a Mon. Hae Hancharoen was a farmer. Som Pit was the 11th of his parents' 13 children.

[13]An *amphur* is a political administrative unit in Thailand. It is a subdivision of a *changwat* (province) and is itself divided into smaller units called *tambons*. An amphur corresponds approximately to a county in the United States.

Readers will frequently find the word *Ban* associated with the names of small communities figuring in this case and other cases in Thailand. *Ban* is the Thai word for village.

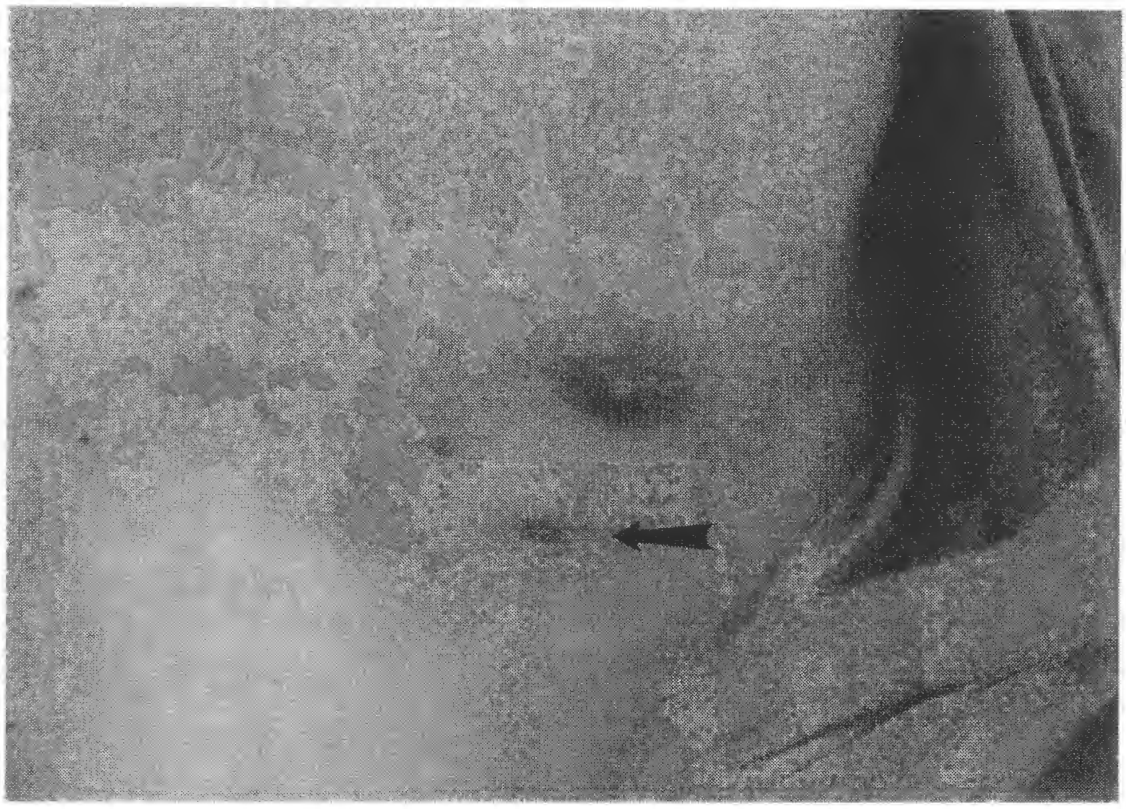

Figure 5-4 Birthmark on Som Pit as it appeared in March 1980 when he was 40½ years old. The birthmark was a hyperpigmented area that was either a nevus or an accessory nipple. The photograph does not show the reddish color of the raised central part of the birthmark and neighboring skin.

His parents noticed at his birth that he had a prominent birthmark under his left nipple (Figure 5-4). The birthmark—according to the concordant testimony of Som Pit's father and older sister—was actually an open sore when he was born, and it oozed a yellowish pus for a month or more after his birth.

No one in the family had an announcing dream before Som Pit's birth, and no one seems to have paid much attention to his birthmark until he was about 2 years old. It was observed then that whenever any woman came to the house, Som Pit would grasp his mother's hand in fear; and sometimes he would run away and hide from the visiting woman. This happened repeatedly, so that his mother finally asked Som Pit why he was afraid of women. He then told his family about how he had been stabbed by a woman in a previous life that he remembered. He said that he had been Nai Soey,[14] had lived at Klong Ban Plakot, and had been stabbed by Nang Hom at Wat Khoo Sang. He said that he had been drunk at the time he was killed.

[14]Nai Soey's full name was Soey Prang Yoo. As I explained in Chapter 1, the word *Nai* is an honorific approximately equivalent to *Mr.* in English. (*Nang* is approximately equivalent to *Mrs.*) It is customary for men to be referred to informally by the honorific and the first (or given) name. I shall accordingly refer to Nai Soey in that way. Similarly, I shall refer to Nang Hom (who killed Nai Soey) without always using her family name.

Nai Soey died in 1935, and Hae Hancharoen had heard of his death several years before Som Pit's birth. However, he had either never known the details of the murder or had forgotten them. He therefore enquired about Nai Soey's death among friends, who confirmed that Som Pit had given correct details about the life and death of Nai Soey. Hae Hancharoen did not mention to me that Som Pit had pointed to his birthmark when he first spoke about the previous life, but Som Pit himself remembered that he had done so. In any event, what he was saying about the previous life would have drawn attention to the birthmark. His sister Charunan told me that when he first spoke about the previous life, his mother immediately believed him, because of his birthmark. Some neighbors, who had known about Nai Soey's murder and who learned about Som Pit's statements, came to see him. They remembered where (on his body) Nai Soey had been stabbed, and they said that Som Pit's birthmark was on the same part of his body. (I shall discuss this correspondence in more detail later.)

Som Pit was a quiet child and said little; this characteristic earned him the nickname "tortoise." His father considered him intelligent, and he did well at school. He was also a responsible young person, so that his father could leave him to guard the house if he had to be away for a time.

When Som Pit was about 4 years old, or perhaps 5, he noticed a girl passing in a boat on the klong.[15] He said that she was his daughter of his previous life. (Som Pit's sister Charunan heard this remark and apparently thought that it was Som Pit's first allusion to the previous life he remembered, although it almost certainly was not.) Som Pit did not give the girl's name, and no one tried to verify that he was correct.

Som Pit never expressed a desire to be taken to Nai Soey's family. (For reasons that I shall explain later, he was ashamed of the circumstances of Nai Soey's death and did not wish to make himself known to Nai Soey's family.) When he was about 12 years old, he recognized one of Nai Soey's sons, Praserth Prang Yoo. However, he did not identify himself to Praserth because of his feeling of shame. Still later, one of Som Pit's older brothers married the daughter of one of Nai Soey's friends, Mong Kol. In the course of the new relationship through his brother's marriage, Som Pit met Mong Kol and remembered him as a friend of Nai Soey. But once again, he did not speak to Mong Kol about the previous life; he later said that he was afraid that he would not have been believed.

When Som Pit was young, he was not unusually religious, but when he was about 15 his mother died, and at the time of her cremation he decided to become a monk. He became a *samanera* (novice) and was later fully ordained. He remained in the same *wat* (temple), Wat Song Tam, up to the time of my last meeting with him in 1980. With the honorific for Buddhist monks in Thailand he was known as Phra Som Pit.

[15]Klongs are canal-like bodies of water with sluggish currents. Their waters ultimately flow into rivers. They are much used for transport and travel in southern Thailand.

It seems that Som Pit never met any member of Nai Soey's family until sometime after the first investigation of the case, by the late Francis Story in 1966. At that time Francis Story had requested, or stimulated, Tem Suvikrom (our interpreter) to trace Nai Soey's family if he could. Tem Suvikrom located Nai Soey's daughter Chang Meyim (whom I met later at Ban Fai, in 1969) and told her about Som Pit. She then visited him at Wat Song Tam in 1967. Som Pit made one visit to Wat Khoo Sang in 1968, but had not returned there up to March 1971. Chang Meyim, however, had come to see him "often" (to use Som Pit's adverb) at Wat Song Tam.

The case of Som Pit became well known in the area where his family lived. (During his early childhood they moved at least twice, but settled at Ban Sae in 1946, when Som Pit was nearly 7 years old.) Word about Som Pit's statements spread back somehow to Nai Soey's family, and some of them went to see him at his home. Som Pit's mother, however, was afraid that Nai Soey's relations might try to take him to live with them; so she would not allow them even to see him. At about this time, or later, Nai Soey's younger sister Nang Man tried to meet Som Pit and went to his home. But he saw her first and fled. Hae Hancharoen then explained to her that Som Pit was afraid of women. Nang Man recalled later (during my principal interview with her) that Som Pit was about 11 years old at the time of this incident.

Information about the case came to the attention of Tem Suvikrom, who later became acquainted with Francis Story and told him about the case in 1966. In September 1966, Francis Story spent 2 days investigating the case. He interviewed Som Pit, his father, one of his older brothers, and one of his older sisters. In 1969 I took up the investigation and had additional interviews with Som Pit, his father, and two more of his siblings. I also interviewed several members of Nai Soey's family and Nang Hom Taptim, who had murdered Nai Soey.

In March 1971, I had another long interview with Som Pit at his wat (Wat Song Tam); and I also talked about the case with the Ven. Chaokhun Uthai Dhammasarn, the abbot of Wat Song Tam.

Colonel Chalor Utogapachana traced the records of the trial of Nang Hom for the murder of Nai Soey. These brought certain details to a greater state of certainty than they had had before. Unfortunately, much of the record had been destroyed in a fire some years earlier, and I could not obtain a report of an autopsy on the body of Nai Soey.

In March 1980, I met Som Pit again (as before, at his wat). I also met again Nang Man, Nai Soey's younger sister (at Wat Khoo Sang), and Prom Choey Suwan, Som Pit's older sister (at Ban Keo).

Persons Interviewed during the Investigation

At Wat Song Tam, Ban Sae, I interviewed:

Phra Som Pit

Ven. Chaokhun Uthai Dhammasarn, abbot of Wat Song Tam

In Ban Sae I interviewed:
Hae Hancharoen, Som Pit's father
Som Sanit Hancharoen, Som Pit's older brother

In Ban Keo I interviewed:
Prom Choey Suwan, Som Pit's older sister

In Ban Fai I interviewed:
Chang Meyim, Nai Soey's daughter

At Wat Khoo Sang I interviewed:
Man, Nai Soey's younger sister
Samboon Kaewsawang, Nang Man's husband (Nai Soey's brother-in-law); headman of Khoo Sang
Prasith Prang Yoo, one of Nai Soey's sons
Pree Boonmee, Nai Soey's youngest sister

In Tai Ban I interviewed:
Hom Taptim, who had killed Nai Soey
Chin Bukkavesa, former chief clerk of the Me Nam Motor Boat Company

In addition to the data from my interviews, I have used in this report notes of interviews that Francis Story had with Som Pit, his father, and two of his siblings whom I did not myself meet. These were Charunan Hancharoen (a sister 2 years older than Som Pit) and Som Chit (a brother 5 years older than Som Pit). I have also used some notes that Tem Suvikrom made of interviews he had (in 1968) with Praserth Prang Yoo (Nai Soey's oldest son) and Nang Hom. Tem Suvikrom interpreted for Francis Story in 1966, and for me in 1969 and 1971. He was thus thoroughly familiar with the case.

Relevant Facts of Geography and Possibilities for Normal Means of Communication between the Two Families

The principal places concerned in this case are in Amphur Prapadaing, about 30 kilometers south of Bangkok. They are all located either on the Chao Phraya River, or near it on klongs that flow into the river. Sa Kla, where Som Pit was born, is about 2 kilometers from Wat Khoo Sang, where Nai Soey died.

As I have already mentioned, Som Pit's mother died when he was about 15. His older siblings, helpful informants on some matters, could only give second-hand testimony concerning the extent to which his parents knew about Nai Soey's life and death before Som Pit began speaking about it. This means therefore that our information on this point comes exclusively from Hae Hancharoen, Som Pit's father. Unfortunately, he made different statements about his prior knowledge of Nai Soey to Francis Story (in 1966) and to me (in 1969). He told Francis Story

that he did not know about Nai Soey's death before Som Pit began to refer to it; but he told me that he *had* heard about Nai Soey's being stabbed before Som Pit began to refer to the previous life. It seems likely that he spoke as honestly as he could at the time to Francis Story but that afterward, perhaps stimulated by Francis Story's visit, he remembered that he had known something about Nai Soey's death before Som Pit spoke about it. He said to me, however, that he had never discussed Nai Soey's murder with his wife before Som Pit mentioned it. That he needed to make inquiries about Nai Soey's death through a friend shows that his knowledge of it was only fragmentary. He was positive that he and his wife did not know in what part of his body Nai Soey had been stabbed. Here again, his statement that "neighbors" examined Som Pit's birthmark and said it corresponded with the location of Nai Soey's wound shows that he could not confirm the correspondence himself. And yet it seems reasonable to suppose that if Hae Hancharoen's neighbors knew about Nai Soey's death in some detail, he himself must have known something about it, as he told me he did.

The Life, Death, and Character of Nai Soey

I know little about the life of Soey Prang Yoo (Nai Soey) before the occasion of his being murdered. He married and had at least six children. He lived near Wat Khoo Sang. He worked as a ticket collector for the Me Nam Motor Boat Company, an occupation that did not endear him to the villagers of the area, since they were dependent on the boat company for much of their transportation.

Nai Soey's son Praserth told Tem Suvikrom that his father had many friends and was "a well-known person." He had many affairs with women. He also had a strong interest in religion, and, like many Thai men, he had once been a monk for 2 weeks.

Nai Soey's wife died in about 1934. His oldest son, Praserth, said that his father began drinking alcohol excessively after his mother died.

Some of my informants remembered Nai Soey as a rather quarrelsome, litigious person. He thought that an uncle had cheated him over some land, so he took him to court and won a judgment against him. Nai Soey was also thought to be a police informer. More in line with his regular work was his drawing the attention of the police to a theft of tickets from the Me Nam Motor Boat Company. He accused one Nai Foom of this theft, and this angered not only Nai Foom, but his sister, Nang Hom. They were distant relatives of Nai Soey. She was then an attractive widow of about 22 years of age. Nai Soey found her appealing and flirted with her, but she rebuffed him.

In April or May of 1935, Nai Soey and Nang Hom both happened to attend a cremation at Wat Khoo Sang. (Cremations in Thailand are not necessarily sad occasions; entertainments and other diversions create the atmosphere of a festival, and many persons, not all connected with the deceased, may attend.)

Nang Hom, from whom I have taken the following account, entered Nai Soey's boat in order to reach the dock from the boat in which she had come to the

wat. Nai Soey embraced her, and she drew a knife and tried to stab him.[16] But he seized the knife and threw it into the klong. She then obtained another knife, and, a little later, when he was walking in the cremation ground, she came up behind him without his noticing her. She reached around his right side and, aiming at his heart, stabbed him in the left side of the chest. Nai Soey cried: "Oi! She stabbed me." When Nang Hom drew out the knife, he collapsed and spoke no more. He must have died within a few minutes. Nang Hom said that he died "as soon as she pulled out the knife," but this seems to be a slight exaggeration. Nai Soey's youngest sister, Pree Boonmee, who was at Wat Khoo Sang at the time (although not an eyewitness of the stabbing), said that he died right after crying out that he had been stabbed. However, his daughter Chang Meyim, who had also been at Wat Khoo Sang when the murder occurred but who was not an eyewitness of it, said that he had died as he was being carried to the police station.

Both Nai Soey and Nang Hom had been drinking before the stabbing occurred. After she stabbed Nai Soey, Nang Hom left the immediate area and apparently tried to mingle casually with the crowd in the festival; but the police quickly arrested her. She was tried and convicted of murdering Nai Soey. According to the trial records, she was convicted on January 23, 1936.[17] She was sentenced to 15 years of imprisonment, but was released (on grounds of good behavior) on July 15, 1945. Nang Hom told me that she avoided capital punishment by confessing to the murder.

My informants gave different estimates of Nai Soey's age when he died. Nang Hom said he was in his early 30s, but his daughter Chang Meyim thought he was about 40.

When I talked with Nang Hom many years later, she showed no repentance for killing Nai Soey. Indeed, she presented herself as having rid the community of a public enemy, saying: "Everyone hated him. He was a rogue....Everyone wanted him to be dead." Nai Soey's brother-in-law, Samboon Kaewsawang, said that the uncle whom Nai Soey had defeated in a lawsuit was so angry about this that he had hired a man to kill Nai Soey; and this man had, in turn, subcontracted the job to Nang Hom. When I raised with Nang Hom the question of whether, when she knifed Nai Soey, she might have been acting on behalf of someone else, she sternly denied this. The murder, she insisted, was an act of sudden anger; she accepted full responsibility for it. Drunk as she was, she became incensed by Nai Soey's

[16]The Thais had, and to some extent still have, a much stronger taboo against a man embracing, or even touching, a woman to whom he is not married than is found in the West. The average Western woman would be annoyed by actions similar to Nai Soey's toward Nang Hom, but she would not think of killing the offending man. This important difference has a bearing also on the shame that Som Pit felt with regard to the circumstances of Nai Soey's death.

[17]This date, taken from a document, enables me to feel confident that Nai Soey's murder occurred in 1935. Several months would minimally elapse between a crime and the conclusion of a trial of the accused. I am, however, less sure about the month. Nang Hom remembered that the murder occurred around the time of the Songkran Festival, which occurs in April each year.

attempt to embrace her. (She was already angry about his having informed against her brother in the matter of the missing boat tickets.) Her claimed motives for the crime accord well with Som Pit's attitude toward Nai Soey's death, which is why I have felt justified in lingering over them.

Statements and Recognitions Made by Som Pit

In Table 5-2, I have listed the statements and recognitions attributed by informants to Som Pit. He made the statements when he first talked about the previous life between the ages of 2 and 5. Som Pit appears to have said little spontaneously when he was a child, and not much more in response to questions. We should not, however, conclude from this that the statements he made to his family showed the boundaries of his memories. In the later 1960s, he mentioned other memories that he had apparently never told anyone else before.

Two recognitions of a sort (items 10 and 11) occurred many years after Som Pit's first statements about the previous life; he made them in 1968 at the time of his single visit to Wat Khoo Sang. Som Pit, comparing what he saw at Wat Khoo Sang in 1968 with what he thought he remembered from the time of Nai Soey in the 1930s, noted changes and commented upon them. By the time of his visit to Wat Khoo Sang in 1968, Som Pit's memories had become considerably diminished. He did not recognize Nang Man, Nai Soey's younger sister; and, according to Prasith Prang Yoo, one of Nai Soey's sons, Som Pit did not recognize him clearly, and admitted this. He also seemed not to remember a wall that Nai Soey had built in or near the wat not long before his death.

Nai Soey's daughter Chang Meyim said that when she first met Som Pit (in 1967), he remembered correctly the number of sons and daughters Nai Soey had had, although he could then only give the name of one of them—Praserth, the oldest son. She nevertheless found his statements, such as they were, convincing.

Som Pit's Memories of Nai Soey's Behavior toward Nang Hom. In 1971 Som Pit said that he remembered that Nai Soey, on the day when Nang Hom stabbed him, had wanted to beat up a man with whom he had quarreled. He had a gun and thought that he might shoot the man "if necessary," but he could not find him. In this state of angry frustration he saw Nang Hom. She was a "hard, tough woman. No one could tease her." So, being angry, he deliberately touched her to insult her. (Som Pit did not recall what Nai Soey's quarrel with the other man had been about; he remembered Nai Soey's strong emotion of anger, not the reason for it.)

Som Pit's Memories of Events after Nang Hom Stabbed Nai Soey. In 1969 Som Pit said that he remembered that Nai Soey did not die immediately after being stabbed. He said that he died as he was being carried away and that he died at the foot of a bridge.

Although Nai Soey then seemed dead to other persons, that was not how Som Pit remembered his condition later. He said that he did not seem to be dead, but still alive. He walked away from the place where Nai Soey's body was and went along a narrow path. (He did not look back at Nai Soey's body.) He was hungry and thirsty.

Table 5-2 **Summary of Statements and Recognitions Made by Som Pit**

Item	*Informants*	*Verification*	*Comments*
1. His name was Nai Soey.	Hae Hancharoen, Som Pit's father Prom Choey Suwan, Som Pit's older sister	Prasith Prang Yoo, one of Nai Soey's sons	
2. He lived at Klong Ban Plakot.	Hae Hancharoen	Man, Nai Soey's younger sister	Ban Plakot seems to be the name for the area in which Wat Khoo Sang is located. Klong Ban Plakot runs close to the wat.
3. He had one son and two daughters.	Hae Hancharoen	Chang Meyim, Nai Soey's second daughter; partly correct	Nai Soey had at least three sons and three daughters.
4. His son was named Praserth.	Hae Hancharoen	Prasith Prang Yoo	Praserth was Nai Soey's oldest son, Prasith the middle one.
5. He was stabbed in the chest.	Hae Hancharoen Prom Choey Suwan	Hom Taptim, Nai Soey's murderer	
6. Nang Hom stabbed him.	Hae Hancharoen Som Chit, Som Pit's brother Prom Choey Suwan	Hom Taptim	
7. Nang Hom used a little knife.	Hae Hancharoen	Unverified	Nang Hom did not say how large the knife was.

8. He was drunk at the time.	Hae Hancharoen	Partly incorrect	Nang Hom said that Nai Soey had been drinking "a little" at the time she killed him. She said that she herself was drunk.
9. The stabbing occurred at Wat Khoo Sang.	Hae Hancharoen	Chang Meyim Hom Taptim	
10. A large tree had stood in front of his house.	Samboon Kaewsawang, Nai Soey's brother-in-law	Samboon Kaewsawang	This and the following item both occurred on the occasion of Som Pit's only visit to Wat Khoo Sang, which occurred in 1968.
11. There had been a platform on which rice had been offered.	Samboon Kaewsawang	Samboon Kaewsawang	Nai Soey used to provide rice for Buddhist monks. The rice would be put on a platform where the monks could pick it up. The platform had been removed long before Som Pit's visit to Wat Khoo Sang.

He came to a cottage where an old man and woman were sitting together. He asked the woman for water. She gave him a bowl of water and asked him to enter the cottage, but he did not do so. She also gave him some fruit and told him to eat it.[18] But he felt in a hurry to go on, so he drank the water, but did not eat the fruit. When the woman went back into the cottage, he threw it away. When she came out of the cottage, she asked him whether he had eaten the fruit and, lying, he said: "Yes." He then said goodbye and walked on. After that, he remembered nothing until he "regained consciousness" as a child at the age of between 2 and 3.[19]

Som Pit had no memory of Nai Soey's funeral; and he had no memory of events connected with his mother's conception of him.

A Possibly Relevant Recurrent Dream by Som Pit. Som Pit had a recurrent dream that deserves mention. It began when he was about 10 and continued to occur until he was about 28. (He was still having it when Francis Story interviewed him in 1966, but had stopped having it 2 or 3 years before I first met him in early 1969.)

In the dream, Som Pit went to a festival and got into a quarrel with a large group; a *man* almost stabbed him, but he was able to run away in time. Som Pit had not noted any situation that seemed to precipitate this recurrent dream. He realized that it had important similarities with the events that he remembered in the life of Nai Soey, but otherwise he could not account for it. (Francis Story conjectured that the substitution in the dream of a man for a woman as the stabber derived from Som Pit's shame over Nai Soey's misconduct with a woman.)

Som Pit's Behavior Related to the Previous Life

Circumstances and Manner of Som Pit's Speaking about the Previous Life. I have already mentioned that Som Pit said little about the previous life when he was a young child. He might never have spoken about it at all, if his mother had not asked him to explain his phobia of women. He did, however, make at least one spontaneous remark about it—when he thought he recognized one of Nai Soey's daughters passing in a boat on the klong.

Som Pit's Attitude toward Nai Soey's Life and Family. Unlike most children subjects of these cases, Som Pit did not ask to meet members of the family of the person whose life he remembered. He said (in 1966) that he felt affection for Nai Soey's family, but did not wish to meet them.[20] When he recognized one of Nai Soey's sons, Praserth, he was too shy to identify himself as Nai Soey to

[18]This is evidently an allusion to the "fruit of forgetfulness." I have discussed elsewhere its significance and its occurrence in other cases of Thailand and Burma (Stevenson, 1983a).

[19]Other Thai subjects who said they remembered experiences between death in the previous life and their birth include: Ampan Petcherat, Ornuma Sua Ying Yong, the Ven. Chaokhun Rajsuthajarn, Thiang San Kla, Hair Kam Kanya, Ratana Wongsombat, Bongkuch Promsin, Chanai Choomalaiwong, and Tong In Songcham.

[20]Lalitha Abeyawardena was another subject who did not wish to meet the (marital) family of the person whose life she remembered.

Praserth. And when his sister Charunan called him "Soey"—apparently to tease him at times—he became angry and chased her. He explained his attitude as due to his feeling ashamed, because Nai Soey had been stabbed after misbehaving with a woman. In keeping with this attitude, Som Pit never seems to have expressed, or even entertained, any idea of vengefulness against Nang Hom.

Som Pit's Phobias of Women and Knives. Som Pit had a strong fear of women that manifested when he was barely 2 years old. He himself told me that he ran away from women when he was a year old, when he would have been barely able to run at all. He did not say that he himself remembered running from women in fear at this young age; he was repeating what his mother later told him. His father said that he first noticed Som Pit's fear of women when Som Pit was about 2 years old. The phobia persisted at least up to the age of 11, which was the age Nai Soey's sister Nang Man said he was when she tried to meet him at his home and he fled at the sight of her.

Som Pit remembered that his phobia comprised a general fear of the whole female sex.[21] He recalled being afraid of small girls as well as of grown women. He does not appear to have been afraid of his mother because, as I mentioned earlier, he used to cling to her when he saw a strange woman.

After Som Pit entered the wat, he naturally came into contact with women much less. He must gradually have lost his phobia of women, because he appreciated the visits to him that Chang Meyim continued to make after they first met in 1968.

The informants gave concordant testimony concerning Som Pit's fear of women, but not about whether he had had a phobia of knives. In 1966 Som Pit's father told Francis Story that Som Pit had been afraid of knives when he was a child; but in 1969 he told me that Som Pit had *not* had a phobia of knives. Som Pit's own statements on the matter also seemed to vary. In 1966 he said that he had a phobia of knives in childhood and that he still had it; but in 1969 he said he had lost this fear; and in 1971 he said that he had suffered from a phobia of knives for only a few years, and that he had lost it when he was about 3 years old. His older sister Prom Choey Suwan said that he had been afraid of both knives and women when he was a boy. It seems likely therefore that Som Pit had a cautious attitude toward knives, but that this was too slight to have left a clear impression on his own memory or that of his father.

Som Pit's Motives for Joining the Sangha. According to Som Pit's remembrance later (in the interviews Francis Story and I had with him during the years from 1966 to 1971), his interest in joining the Sangha had several phases. He first thought of becoming a monk when he was about 9 or 10 years old. (It will be remembered that he still had an active phobia of women at this age.) As he brooded about the life of Nai Soey, it occurred to him that he could avoid repeating—as he saw his situation—the follies of Nai Soey's life by becoming a monk.

[21]In the report of Daw Aye Myint's case in Chapter 4 I listed in a footnote other subjects who had phobic responses generalized to a whole class of persons.

He was afraid that if he did not do this he might again be killed by a woman. While he was still thinking noncommittally about this solution, the pleasures of later childhood and the early teens overtook him. From then until he was 14 or 15, he enjoyed being a normal boy and thought little about anything else. The death of his mother brought on a crisis when he was about 15. He wanted to do something meritorious that he could transmit to her; and so he decided to become a monk for just the day of her cremation.[22] But when he took this step, he thought he might stay on in the wat instead of disrobing the next day, as he had originally planned to do. After he made this decision, he felt intensely happy—ecstatic we might say—and this elation confirmed for him that he had chosen the right course. Thereafter he never left the Sangha (the community of Buddhist monks).[23]

I do not wish readers to think that Som Pit entered the Sangha only as a refugee from the perils of associating with women. That would be taking much too narrow a view both of Som Pit and of Buddhist monasteries. I should add also that the Ven. Chaokhun Uthai Dhammasarn, the abbot of Wat Song Tam, had a high regard for Som Pit and obviously considered him an exemplary monk.

Som Pit's Birthmark

Figure 5-4 shows the appearance of Som Pit's birthmark as it appeared in March 1980 when Som Pit was about 40½ years old. The raised center of the birthmark was red and slightly suggestive of a hemangioma; the peripheral parts had increased pigment compared with the surrounding skin, so that it could be regarded as a pigmented nevus.

Som Pit said that no other member of his family had a birthmark like his. He himself had no other birthmarks or congenital anomalies apart from a few nevi (some of which can be seen in the figure showing his birthmark).

The birthmark lies on the mammary line (also sometimes called the milk line), and its position and appearance suggest a supernumerary or accessory nipple. It may in one sense *be* a supernumerary nipple. By this I mean that some stimulus may have prevented the normal regression of the embryonic mammary ridge in this area. This could have led to the development of a supernumerary nipple, which occurs in frequencies that have varied in different series from 0.4%

[22]Nearly every Thai man becomes a monk for a few weeks or months at some time during his life. Occasionally, one may become a monk only for a day or several days in connection with some special occasion. Som Pit's idea of becoming a monk for just one day at the time of his mother's cremation is an example of this custom.

In Buddhism merit can be transferred from a person doing a good deed to another person, whether living or dead; and just as it is meritorious for laymen to feed monks, it is even more so for a person to become a monk, even for a day.

[23]Warnasiri Adikari was another subject who joined the Sangha mainly because of memories of a previous life. Warnasiri, shaken by memories of three previous lives and dismayed at the prospect of many more lives to come, chose to enter the Sangha because it seemed to offer the best opportunities for getting completely off "the wheel of rebirth."

(Guest, 1923) through 1% (De Cholnoky, 1939) to 5% (Evans, 1959) of adults. Bruce (1878-79) stated that the reported incidence was higher when physicians especially looked for supernumerary nipples, and he found an incidence of 24 cases (7.6%) in 315 consecutive persons thus examined. Of his cases 19 (9.11%) occurred in males and 5 (4.8%) in females. The anomaly occurs much more frequently on the left side than on the right; Bruce noted that among 52 cases that he observed, 36 were on the left side and only 16 on the right side.

What was the stimulus, however, for a supernumerary nipple in Som Pit? And why should he have one on the left side rather than on the right? (He had no supernumerary nipple or birthmark on the right side of his chest; I examined him there.) Even though supernumerary nipples occur more often on the left side than on the right, that is only a partial answer to my question. And why does Som Pit have any supernumerary nipple at all when most persons have none?[24]

The appearance of an open sore and the yellow pus that Som Pit's birthmark exuded for a month after his birth tell against his birthmark being a supernumerary nipple or at least tell against its being such a nipple and nothing more. Some supernumerary nipples are associated with functional breast tissue and may even, at the owner's maturity, secrete milk; but that is quite a different process from the suppuration that Som Pit's family observed in his birthmark.

I pass now to the question of the correspondence between Som Pit's birthmark and the wound that killed Nai Soey. Can we be confident that Nang Hom stabbed Nai Soey on the *left* side of his chest? Perhaps the best evidence that she did was given by Hae Hancharoen, who said that persons familiar with Nai Soey's wound said that Som Pit's birthmark corresponded in location with the wound. These persons came to see Som Pit when he was less than 5 years old, so they were drawing on memories of Nai Soey's wound that were then less than 10 years old. By the time I came to question my informants, another 25 years had elapsed. One might have thought that the details of such a murder would have been indelibly fixed in the minds of all those whom it affected, but this was not so. I questioned six informants who claimed to have seen Nai Soey's body after he was stabbed or to have learned about the stabbing soon after it occurred. I disqualified one because he said that when he saw Nai Soey's dead body the knife was still in his chest; Nang Hom distinctly remembered withdrawing the knife after she had stabbed Nai Soey, and no other informant said that he or she saw the knife in Nai

[24]Birthmarks that may have been supernumerary nipples have figured in four other cases of this work: those of Pappu Singh, Yogesh Yadav, Maung Aung Myint, and Ram Tirath Sharma. In the first two of these cases, a supernumerary nipple appears to have been mistaken for a birthmark corresponding to a wound in a previous life but, unlike the case of Som Pit, no such correspondence was found. In Maung Aung Myint's case, as in Som Pit's, a birthmark that may have been a supernumerary nipple corresponded closely in location with the fatal wound on the previous personality. In the case of Ram Tirath Sharma, evidence less than completely satisfactory suggested a correspondence between the birthmark, located where a supernumerary nipple often occurs, and a nonfatal wound where a bull had gored the man whose life Ram Tirath Sharma remembered.

Soey's body after his death. A second informant said the wound was under the nipple, but could not remember on which side. A third informant first said that the wound was below the left nipple, but he subsequently withdrew his earlier assertion of certainty on the matter. A fourth said the wound was under the left nipple, but she had not seen the body herself. A fifth said she did not remember on which side Nai Soey had been stabbed, but as she talked she pointed to the right breast.

This brings us to the statements of Nang Hom, my sixth informant for this detail. In the course of the day's work, I have met and interviewed at least half a dozen murderers of previous personalities concerned in these cases. And I have always thought that, if they were not drunk at the time of the crime, they should be considered the best informed persons concerning where they had wounded their victims. Unfortunately, Nang Hom *had* been drunk when she stabbed Nai Soey. (I think that she did not know where Som Pit's birthmark was located, although I cannot be positive that Tem Suvikrom did not describe it to her when he first interviewed her in 1968.) When she first talked with Tem Suvikrom, she recalled that she had stabbed Nai Soey under the nipple, but could not recall on which side. When she talked with me a year later, I think I obliged her to remember what happened in more detail.[25] She gave me a full description of how she had killed Nai Soey. (I have given much of her account already.) She asserted firmly that she had reached around Nai Soey's right side, aimed at his heart, and stabbed him on the left side of the chest. *After* Nang Hom had made a definite statement to me about the place where she had stabbed Nai Soey, I showed her a photograph of Som Pit's birthmark that I had with me. She examined it; and I do not think that she was merely being compliant when she then said that the birthmark was at exactly the place where she had put her knife into Nai Soey.

That Nai Soey died within a minute, or several minutes at most, of being stabbed may be regarded as some additional evidence that the wound punctured his heart. The rapidity with which Nai Soey died tells us that the knife perforated either the heart itself or a large blood vessel. I am not saying that a penetrating stab on the right side of the chest, especially one directed medially, could not puncture the heart or some associated great vessel, but it is less likely to do so than a wound made directly into the heart on the left side of the chest.

Comments on the Evidence of Paranormal Processes in the Case

I have little to add under this heading. It seems to me unlikely that Som Pit obtained from members of his family, or anyone else, the correct information he had as a young child about the death of Nai Soey. As with some other cases in this volume, however, I will not press the merits of the informational features of the

[25]A person who is urged to remember some event more clearly than he has been able to do up to the time of urging does not necessarily then include more incorrect details in what he says. Gauld and Stephenson (1967) found that subjects put under pressure to recall details accurately made fewer errors in remembering a story than those who were instructed casually without exhortation to do their best.

case. For me, its behavioral features—and Som Pit's birthmark—are more important. Som Pit identified strongly with Nai Soey and showed shame and phobias that accorded with the circumstances in which Nai Soey died. He had a birthmark on the left side of his chest that he said corresponded with the stab wound that killed Nai Soey. All informants agreed that Nai Soey had been stabbed in the chest. Some were doubtful about the side of the chest on which he had been stabbed; but the most reliable witness—the murderer herself—said she had stabbed him on the left side of the chest at the site of Som Pit's birthmark.

Som Pit's Later Development

When I last met Som Pit in March 1980, he was 40½ years old. He had been in the Sangha since he was 15, always in the same wat. He had become assistant to the abbot of the wat and was content with the life he had chosen.

He no longer thought about the previous life spontaneously, only when someone like myself came and asked him about it. His memories had faded to some extent, but he remembered the name of Nai Soey and how he had been stabbed. He repeated much of what he had said earlier with little variation. However, he also introduced one completely new detail to his account of how he had incurred the wrath of Nang Hom. He said that as Nai Soey he had somehow persuaded Nang Hom to come away from the wat, where she had been attending the cremation ceremony, and then, in some isolated spot, he and some male friends had raped her. They then returned to the cremation ceremony; Nang Hom followed them back and stabbed Nai Soey.

Comment. Som Pit had never before suggested to members of our team that Nai Soey had actually raped Nang Hom, although he might well have had this desire. Moreover, Nang Hom had not mentioned that Nai Soey had raped her, and I think that if this had happened she would have mentioned it to me, if only to add further justification for her killing Nai Soey. I am inclined to think that as amnesia for the actual events affected Som Pit he confabulated imaginary details to fill in the gaps in his memories. Some other explanation for this new claimed memory may be better, but this one seems preferable to me at present.

THE CASE OF ALİ UĞURLU

Summary of the Case and Its Investigation

Ali Uğurlu was born in Tabakzade Köyü, in the province of Adana, Turkey, in 1934. His parents were Aziz Uğurlu and his wife, Remziye. Ali was one of eight children of his family. He was not the oldest child, but I did not learn his order of birth among his siblings. His family were Alevis.

Before Ali's birth his mother dreamed that a deceased man called Süleyman Abdülatif, who had died not long before and whom she had known

slightly, said that he wished to be reborn as her son. About 2 years before his death, Süleyman had indicated that he wished to be her child if he were reborn. (I shall describe the dream later.)

At Ali's birth he had "four or five" birthmarks on his abdomen (Figures 5-5, 5-6, and 5-7), and I shall also describe these later.

When Ali was about 3 years old, he began to speak about the life of Süleyman. He recounted how Süleyman had been killed in a quarrel, and he recognized several persons known to Süleyman, of whom the most important was the man who had killed him, Ali Ümran.

Ali Uğurlu himself was the first informant for his case. Learning (in 1967) of the investigations of Reşat Bayer and myself in Adana, he offered his own case as one worthy of our attention. He said that he still preserved the memories of the previous life that he had had as a young child. We first met him in October 1967, at which time he was 33 years old. Although the case was old then, we were able to meet enough firsthand witnesses for it to make me feel justified in including it in this work.

In 1971 I met Ali Uğurlu again and at that time obtained the photographs of several of his birthmarks shown in Figures 5-6 and 5-7.

On May 25, 1983, Dr. Can Polat (on my behalf) met Ali Uğurlu in Adana and obtained some information about his later development that I have included in this report.

Persons Interviewed during the Investigation

In Adana I interviewed:

Ali Uğurlu
Remziye Uğurlu, Ali's mother
Yusuf Kılıç, friend of the Uğurlu family[26]
Ali Ümran, who had killed Süleyman Abdülatif

In Güleklidam I interviewed:

Hamide Fidangül, widow of Süleyman Abdülatif

Ali's father, Aziz Uğurlu, had died before 1967.

Relevant Facts of Geography and Possibilities for Normal Means of Communication between the Two Families

Although Ali Uğurlu was born in an Adana village, his family subsequently moved into Adana. I do not know when this move occurred, but Ali must still have been a young child, because when he was between 4 and 5 he frequently visited Hamide Fidangül, who was then living in Adana in the house she had occupied with her husband.

[26]Yusuf Kılıç was the father of Erkan Kılıç and Selma Kılıç, who were both subjects of other cases.

Süleyman Abdülatif's family lived in the village of Kırmızıdam, but after his marriage he lived in the Mirzat Çelebi quarter of Adana, and following his death his widow continued to live there for a time. During Ali's early childhood the houses of his family and of Süleyman's widow, Hamide Fidangül, were about 1 kilometer apart. Subsequently, Hamide moved out of Adana to the village of Güleklidam, where I met her.

I said above that Remziye Uğurlu had had a slight acquaintance with Süleyman Abdülatif. Ali Uğurlu said that his father also had known Süleyman Abdülatif. However, Hamide Fidangül said that she had not known the Uğurlu family during her husband's lifetime.

The principal statements about the previous life that Ali made when young concerned the death of Süleyman Abdülatif, and although Remziye Uğurlu said that she had not heard of Süleyman's death until after she gave birth to Ali, she did learn about it then. Ali Ümran was tried and sentenced for killing Süleyman, and the main facts of Süleyman's death would have been known in the community where the two families lived. It would not necessarily follow that Ali's family knew, before he mentioned them, all the details that Ali stated, such as that Süleyman had struck the first blow in the fatal quarrel. Details such as this would likely be known and remembered only by eyewitnesses of the quarrel (which Ali's parents were not) and subsequently by the police and lawyers concerned in Ali Ümran's trial. Nevertheless, I think the main value of the case rests not on Ali's statements, but on his strong identification with Süleyman and on the birthmarks he had.

The Life, Death, and Character of Süleyman Abdülatif

Süleyman Abdülatif was born (probably) around 1900. His parents lived in Kırmızıdam, a village of Adana, and I think that he was almost certainly born there.

He appears to have had no settled occupation other than that of a wrestler. For this he was renowned.

He married a woman about 10 years older than himself, and they had no children.

On one of the occasions when Süleyman Abdülatif met Remziye Uğurlu, they were working together at a harvest. Remziye had taken some of her children with her to the fields, and Süleyman (Remziye told me many years later) was astonished and pleased at the good care she took of her children. The sight of her concern for them moved him to say that he would be happy to be reborn as her child.

He died about 2 years after making this remark. His end came in the following manner, for the description of which I have drawn mostly from the testimony of the man who killed him, Ali Ümran.

Süleyman became attracted to Ali's young wife and began to talk openly of having sexual relations with her. Ali objected to this impudence. One day Süleyman and Ali were drinking in a café at Kırmızıdam and began to quarrel about Ali's wife. Süleyman's wife, who was present, tried to calm him but unsuccessfully. Süleyman seized a heavy pole or baton and advanced toward Ali. The

latter tried to escape, but Süleyman pursued him, saying that he was the avenging angel, which implied that he was going to kill Ali. He aimed a blow at Ali's head, but the latter managed to receive it on his arm. He then pulled out a knife that he had and stabbed Süleyman four or five times in the abdomen. Süleyman fell down and was taken to a hospital in Adana, where he died a few days later. He was about 33 or 34 years old when he died, in 1934.

Ali Ümran was arrested, tried for the murder of Süleyman, and sentenced to 10 years in prison.

I tried unsuccessfully to obtain a copy of the record of Ali Ümran's trial, but records as far back as 1934 were not available. I could not therefore study a post-mortem report for an indication of the location of Süleyman's fatal wounds. However, I asked Ali Ümran in what part of the body he had stabbed Süleyman. He replied by gesturing rather generally toward his abdomen. Süleyman's widow, Hamide Fidangül, said that she had seen the wounds on her husband's body. She indicated by gesturing toward her body that they had been on the right side of the abdomen. She herself appears not to have examined Ali Uğurlu's birthmarks, but she said that her brother-in-law (presumably one of Süleyman's brothers, whom I did not interview) did examine them and was convinced, from their correspondence with his brother's wounds, that Ali Uğurlu was Süleyman reborn.

Statements and Recognitions Made by Ali

When Ali Uğurlu began to speak about the previous life that he remembered, he stated the name, Süleyman, of the person he claimed to be and mentioned also the name of Süleyman's father, Abdülatif.[27] Remziye Uğurlu said that Ali had stated no other names, but Ali said (in 1967) that he had (as a young child) named the man who had murdered Süleyman, and I am inclined to think that he did do this and that his mother had subsequently forgotten that he had done so. Be that as it may, Ali's mother said that he had recognized Süleyman's murderer, Ali Ümran, when he first met him. Concerning this, I shall first give Ali Uğurlu's own account of how he recognized Ali Ümran and then some variant details furnished me by his mother.

It happened that not long after Ali Uğurlu had begun speaking about the previous life, his father, Aziz, was sentenced to a term in the prison where Ali Ümran was serving his term of imprisonment for Süleyman's murder. Ali's mother took him on one occasion to visit her husband (and his father) in the prison. At the prison, his father, who knew about his son's claim to be Süleyman reborn, asked him whether he could recognize the man who had stabbed him (in the pre-

[27]In Turkey a son's second name is his father's first name. This explains why the full given name of the person whose life Ali Uğurlu remembered was Süleyman Abdülatif. I did not learn the family name, if they had one in the 1930s. As I have explained earlier, family names were introduced in Turkey only in 1935, and their use developed slowly. (See Appendix A.)

vious life). Aziz knew that Ali Ümran was a fellow prisoner when he challenged his son to recognize him. Ali Uğurlu said that he picked out Ali Ümran in a group of several prisoners.

Remziye Uğurlu said that *she* had asked Ali to point out the murderer. (It is possible that both Remziye and Aziz challenged Ali to identify Süleyman's murderer.) Remziye said that Ali Uğurlu had recognized Ali Ümran, and so did Ali Ümran himself. The accounts of Ali Uğurlu and his mother differed concerning the number of prisoners in the group among whom Ali Uğurlu had picked out Ali Ümran. Remziye did not know Ali Ümran at the time she took her Ali to the prison, although her husband did. She said that Ali Uğurlu indicated Ali Ümran by saying: "There is the man, the one with a gold tooth wearing a tiny hat."

To continue Remziye's account, she said that Ali Ümran, after being recognized, said to the young boy: "If you claim that I killed you, perhaps you can say which of us struck the first blow." To this Ali Uğurlu replied: "I hit you first using a large pole. Then we struggled, and you killed me with a knife."

The conversation did not end with Ali Uğurlu's last remark. He (Ali Uğurlu) went on to say that he was going to kill Ali Ümran. Ali Ümran told me that to this threat he replied: "That is not in your power. God will take me when he is ready." Remziye Uğurlu remembered a different response by Ali Ümran which may have been made on the same occasion or at a later meeting between the two Alis. According to her, Ali Ümran told Ali Uğurlu: "No, my child. I made a mistake. Be wise. You will lose your life. Don't do what I did."

The Uğurlu family were for a time tenants of Yusuf Kılıç, whose family had known Süleyman Abdülatif. Yusuf Kılıç said that when Ali Uğurlu saw his (Yusuf's) father for the first time, he ran toward him saying his name "Hussan" as he did so. On the same occasion Ali recognized Yusuf also and gave Yusuf's name. Yusuf Kılıç said that Ali recognized "everyone in the quarter," but I did not learn details of these other recognitions.

Hamide Fidangül said that Ali Uğurlu found his way unaided to her house, which, as I mentioned earlier, was about 1 kilometer from the Uğurlus' house in Adana. This is credible, because he arrived at her house alone, although followed fairly closely by his sister, who came after him to bring him back. Ali had been talking about going to see his (previous) wife for some time, and so, when his disappearance was noticed, his sister could conjecture where to look for him.

Arrived at Hamide's house, Ali declared that she was his wife. He also said: "So here I am in my own house. And I had a brother here."[28] This was correct, because Süleyman's brother lived close to the house where Süleyman and Hamide lived.

[28]The tense of these two sentences differs in my notes, but I think that I may have slipped in making the notes and that it is more likely that Ali used the present tense for both sentences.

An Announcing Dream and Another Dream

When Remziye Uğurlu was near the end of her pregnancy with Ali, she dreamed that Süleyman Abdülatif (whom she recognized) appeared and seemed to wish to come close to her. She asked him why he was coming so close, and he replied: "Don't be afraid. I have been sent here to be your son. I have been killed at Kırmızıdam."

At the time of having this dream Remziye had not learned about the death of Süleyman Abdülatif. However, when the following morning she told other persons about her dream—presumably these persons included her husband—they told her that Süleyman Abdülatif had been "killed just recently." Remziye said that she had given birth to Ali the day after her dream, but it was possibly 2 days later, because Hamide Fidangül recalled that Remziye had come to her and said that her husband was going to be reborn as her son; and Hamide recalled that Remziye had given birth to Ali the day after *that*. On both accounts the interval between the dream and Ali's birth was short; and so was the interval between Süleyman's death and Ali's birth. My inability to obtain documents in the case makes it impossible to state the exact length of this interval, but I should think it was not more than 1 or 2 months. Beyond that duration the phrase "killed just recently" would not seem appropriate.

A month after the dream described above and also about a month after Ali's birth, Remziye had another dream, which she also recalled in 1967. In this second dream Süleyman said to her: "Now that I have come here why do you not believe who I am?" With that he opened his shirt to show her his stab wounds, seemingly in an effort to convince her of his identity.[29]

Comment. When Remziye went to Hamide's house and told her about her first dream, she was evidently convinced that Süleyman was going to be reborn as her son; but afterward she may have become more skeptical. These doubts might have generated the second dream to which we do not necessarily need to suppose that the personality of the murdered Süleyman contributed.

Ali's Behavior Related to the Previous Life

Circumstances and Manner of Ali's Speaking about the Previous Life. I learned nothing about what stimulated Ali to speak about the previous life, but he appears to have spoken about it often when he was between the ages of 3 and 5. Hamide Fidangül said that he spoke "often" about his wish to visit Süleyman's house. (She must have learned this from members of Ali's family.) Remziye

[29]In the report of the case of Mahmut Ekici I listed examples of other cases in which a concerned previous personality communicated—usually in a dream—after the birth of the child who had memories of that person.

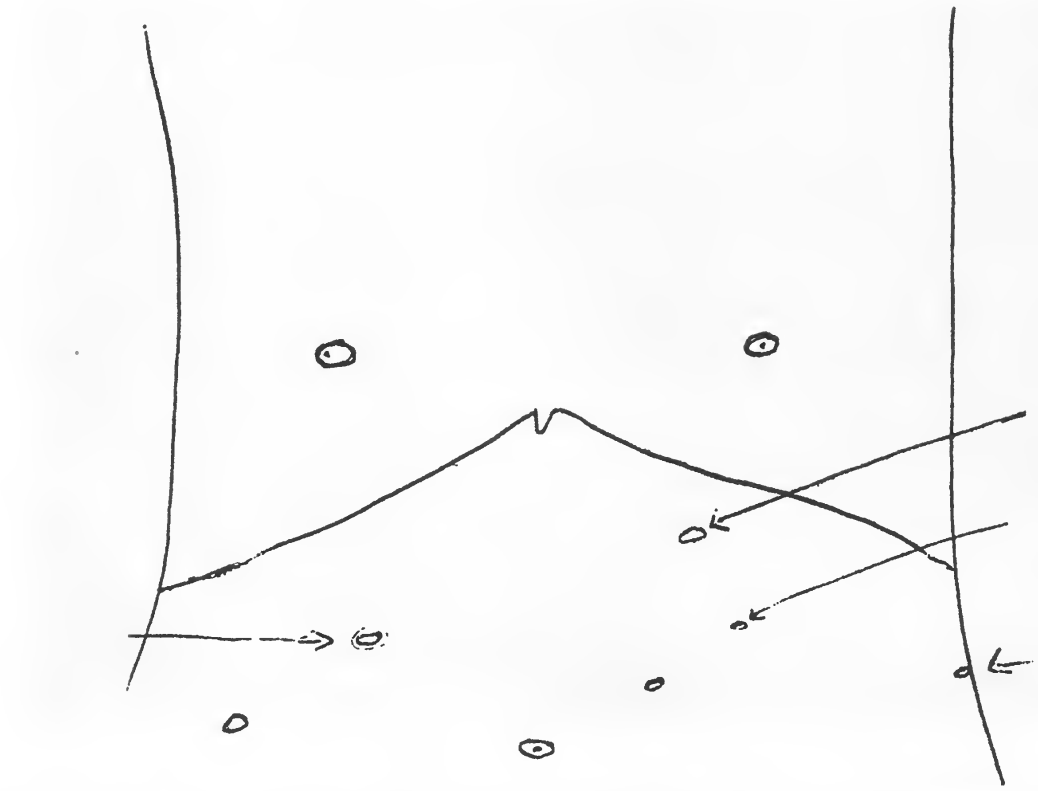

Figure 5-5 Sketch made in 1967 showing approximate location of six birthmarks on the abdomen of Ali Uğurlu at the age of 33. The birthmarks were oval or lenticular in shape. Arrows point to four of the birthmarks. The lowest (ovoid) circle in the midline, with dot in the center, represents the umbilicus.

Uğurlu did not say that Ali spoke often about going to Süleyman's house, but she did say that he went there often.

Ali's Vengefulness. Ali repeated more than once the threat to kill Ali Ümran that he made when he first met him in the prison. But later (in his teens) he lost his attitude of vengefulness, and eventually he and Ali Ümran became good friends.

Ali's Attachment to Süleyman's Family. Hamide Fidangül confirmed Remziye's statement that Ali came often to visit her when he was a young child. She said that he did this when he was about 4 or 5 years old. He might have been younger at his first visit, because she said that he would come to her house at a time when he could not yet speak fluently. His visits were not fully endorsed by his family, because he sometimes slipped away unobserved.

Ali Uğurlu's Birthmarks

Figure 5-5 is a sketch that I made (in 1967) on which I indicated the location of six birthmarks on Ali's abdomen. (Arrows point to four of these.) They were all in the middle or upper abdomen superior to the umbilicus. Figures 5-6 and 5-7 show close-up views of three of these birthmarks, including the two

Figure 5-6 The circles surround two of the birthmarks on Ali Uğurlu as they appeared in 1971, when he was 37 years old. The marks were slightly depressed below the surrounding skin and approximately 3-4 millimeters long and 2 millimeters wide.

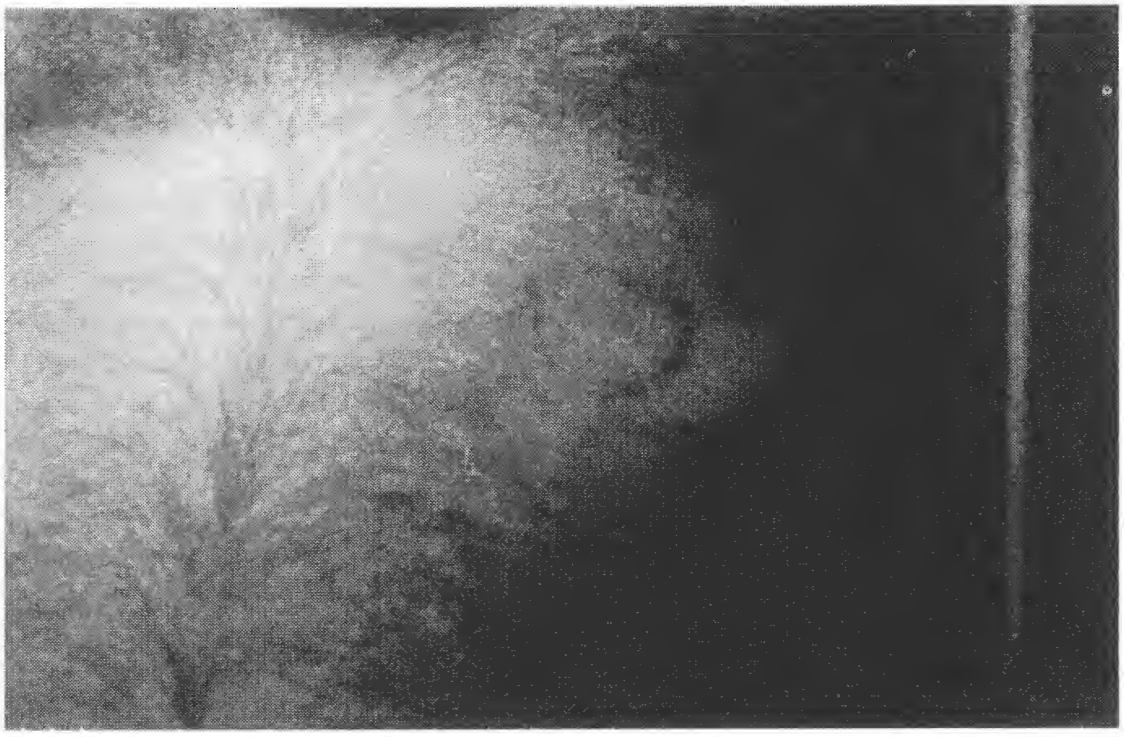

Figure 5-7 Another of the birthmarks on Ali Uğurlu's abdomen as it appeared in 1971.

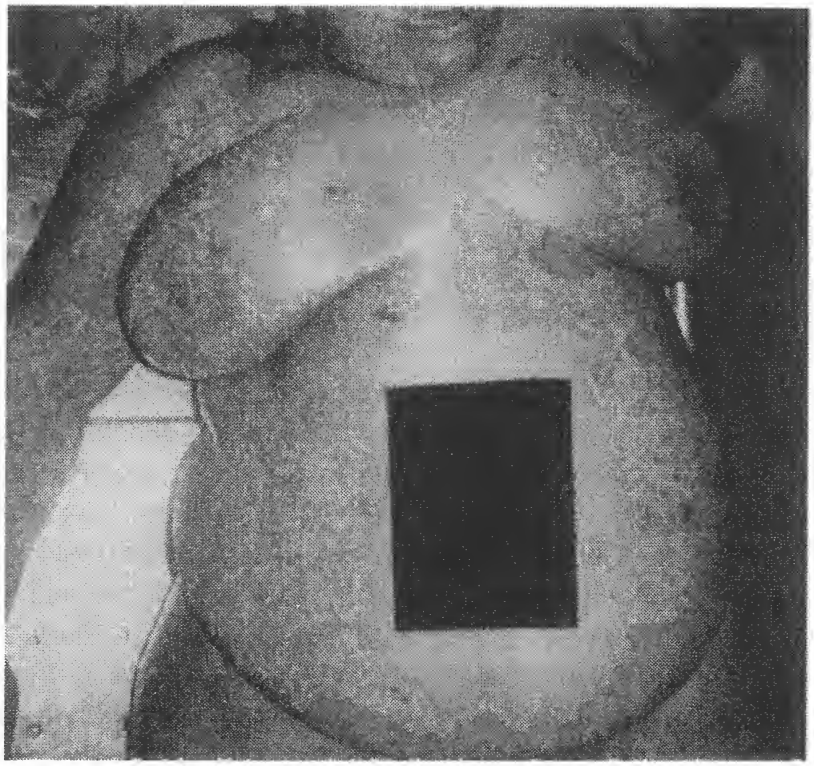

Figure 5-8 Trunk of a women murdered in Virginia showing multiple stab wounds. Several of the wounds can be seen to have a distinctly oval or lenticular shape. (Courtesy of Dr. David Wiecking.)

largest. These last two were both approximately 3-4 millimeters long and 2 millimeters wide. They were oval or lenticular in shape, depressed in their centers to a depth of about 1 millimeter compared with the surrounding skin, and hairless. At least two of the other, smaller birthmarks were also depressed below the level of the surrounding skin, but I had only one of them photographed. The most lateral birthmark (on Ali's left flank) was the largest of all, but was not depressed. It was a hyperpigmented macule, and it also was not photographed.

Figure 5-8 shows stab wounds on the abdomen of a woman who was murdered in Virginia. Several of these have the oval or lenticular shape characteristic of many stab wounds (Gresham, 1984). (See also Figures 4-8 and 4-9.) In my report of the case of Mehmet Karaytu (Chapter 12) I discuss the different wounds that different bladed weapons may make (see Figure 12-14).

Remziye Uğurlu said that Ali had "four or five wounds" when he was born. She indicated her abdomen as their general site, but had forgotten their more precise locations. She said the wounds (as she called them) bled whenever the baby Ali cried and that this continued for about 40 days. The baby did not want to be nursed at the breast. (I presume this was because the area of the birthmarks hurt when he was held for nursing.) He was therefore nourished by having a piece of cotton placed in his mouth. Milk was then poured onto that, and he sucked it into his mouth. (Bottle feeding was probably unknown in that part of Turkey during the mid-1930s.)

Ali Uğurlu told me in 1967 that the birthmarks became red whenever he bathed in warm water. Unlike Derek Pitnov and Mahmut Ekici, two other subjects who recalled previous lives that ended with stabbing in the abdomen, he had never (since infancy) suffered from abdominal pains.

Ali's Later Development

In 1967 Ali said that he still remembered everything about the previous life that he had earlier remembered as a young child. He repeated this claim in 1971. He certainly appeared to remember a great deal in 1967, because Reşat Bayer and I tape-recorded a long interview with him that year. In general, what he stated accorded with what I learned from other informants. It is possible that he really had preserved the primary imaged memories that he had had as a child; but it is also possible that these had become superseded by, or mixed with, memories of what he had said when young and of what older persons told him he had said.

During his interview with Can Polat in May 1983, Ali Uğurlu said that he had then forgotten all the memories he had of the previous life, with the exception that he remembered the face of Süleyman. He also said that he had stopped visiting Süleyman's family not long after Reşat Bayer and I had last met him in 1971.

As a child of 8 or 9 years old, Ali showed an interest in singing and a talent for it. In adulthood he became a professional singer of popular songs and was good enough to have made at least one tour in the United States as a singer. He did not claim that he had carried over his talent for singing from a previous life. The entire Uğurlu family had good voices and sang; and two of Ali's sisters played Turkish musical instruments. Ali said that he had not been a singer in the previous life, and Süleyman's widow, Hamide, confirmed this; she said that Süleyman sang no more or less than anyone else.

THE CASE OF CHANAI CHOOMALAIWONG

Summary of the Case and Its Investigation

Chanai Choomalaiwong was born in the village of Nong La Korn, Phichit Province, Thailand, on October 10, 1967. His parents were Kamron Choomalaiwong and his wife, Somkid. Chanai was their only child. Kamron was a barber. He and his wife separated (for economic reasons, it seems) before Chanai's birth. Kamron went to Chiangmai while Somkid stayed with her mother, Prom Mayluthong, who owned a duck farm at Nong La Korn.

When Chanai was born, he had two birthmarks on his head (Figures 5-9 and 5-11), which I shall describe later.

When Chanai was about 2 years old, his mother moved to Bangkok, where she worked as a seamstress. Subsequently, her husband also moved to Bangkok and rejoined his wife in about 1974, when Chanai was 7; but Chanai continued to

live with Prom. As a result of these arrangements, Chanai was brought up by his maternal grandmother from the age of 2. Both of his parents visited him at his grandmother's home from time to time, but they seem to have stayed there only for a day or two at a time. Chanai would also sometimes come to Bangkok to visit his parents, and I met him there for the first time in 1979.

When Chanai was about 3 years old, his grandmother noticed that in playing with other children he would declare himself to be a teacher and would also say that he had been a teacher in his last life. Prom paid little attention to this until Chanai, at the age of about 3½, began to beg her insistently to take him to see his parents, wife, and children. He said that he had been called Bua Kai, had been a teacher, and had been shot and killed. He stated the names of Bua Kai's parents and claimed he could show where they lived at a place called Khao Phra.

Chanai repeated his requests to go to the previous family so often that eventually (when he was still less than 4 years old), Prom succumbed to his importunity and took him on a bus to Ban Khao Sai, where they got down at the market. (Ban Khao Sai is the town nearest to Ban Khao Phra.) From there Chanai led the way to a house in Ban Khao Sai where they found an elderly couple and a large number of their family. Chanai recognized the couple as "his" father and mother. They proved to be the parents of Bua Kai Lawnak, a schoolteacher who had been shot and killed in 1962. Bua Kai's parents were shown Chanai's birthmarks and were sufficiently impressed by these and by what Chanai said to invite him and Prom to return for another visit. They did this—I do not know when, but think it was a few days later—and at that time Chanai recognized other members of Bua Kai's family, as well as some objects that had belonged to Bua Kai. In addition, he answered correctly some penetrating questions with which members of Bua Kai's family tested him.

Here I must acknowledge some confusion on my part—not even yet fully dispelled—as to exactly where Chanai had his first meetings with Bua Kai's family. I did not at first appreciate that the family apparently had two houses, one in the town of Ban Khao Sai and one in the smaller village of Ban Khao Phra. I believe Chanai met the family first in Ban Khao Sai and met them on the second occasion at Ban Khao Phra. If I am wrong about the location of these meetings, the error does not affect the accuracy of the informants' statements about other details of the meetings, including, particularly, the verifications of Chanai's statements by members of Bua Kai's family.

Bua Kai's family, after the above meetings, fully accepted Chanai as Bua Kai reborn. Thereafter, he continued to visit them often. However, the case remained unknown outside the families immediately concerned (and their friends) until one of Chanai's schoolteachers informed a newspaper reporter about it; and a report of the case then appeared in the national newspaper *Thai Rat* on May 19, 1978. Khun Prasit Karoonyavanich (who is a banker of Chonburi with a keen interest in cases suggestive of reincarnation) read this report, and in the summer of 1978 he sent me a translation of it.

Later, in August of the same year, Khun Prasit went to Phichit Province where the case had occurred and tape-recorded interviews with members of both

families concerned in the case. The most important informant of his interviews was Prom Mayluthong, but he also interviewed both of Bua Kai's parents, his wife, and his two (twin) daughters, as well as some other, more marginal informants. Khun Prasit made the tapes of his interviews available to a journalist, T. Liangpibool, who included a chapter on Chanai's case in a booklet on Buddhism that he published later in 1978. Khun Prasit gave me a copy of this booklet, which Janpim Punyanitya, a Thai student at the University of Virginia, translated for me. On the assurance of Khun Prasit that the journalist had used his tapes accurately—and one can readily see from the booklet that the writer quoted large sections of the tape recordings verbatim—I have drawn on it for this report of the case. It has been valuable for me in two respects. First, it contains information obtained from Chanai's father, whom I did not meet and interview. (However, he was not an important informant; he had not been in close touch with Chanai when the case developed.) Second, because I later interviewed nearly all the other informants Khun Prasit had interviewed, I was able to compare what they told me with what they had earlier told Khun Prasit.

My own investigation of the case began in March 1979 when I first met Chanai in Bangkok—without his parents, as it happened. Next I had a long interview (also in Bangkok) with his mother, Somkid, but this was not of great value, because Somkid had lived away from her son since the time when he was about 2. Chanai was present when I met his mother, so I had a chance to ask him some questions left out at our first meeting. On this same visit to Thailand I went to Tapanhin, which is the principal city of the district in which the case developed. In this district I met all the main informants for Bua Kai's family.

By 1979 Prom Mayluthong had moved from Nong La Korn to Nong Pai in Petchaburi Province, and it was not feasible for me to meet her until 1986. I then went to Nong Pai (with Nasib Sirorasa), where I had a long interview with her. It happened that Chanai's maternal uncle was at Prom's house when we went there, and we were able to talk with him also.

I hoped to obtain a report of a postmortem examination of Bua Kai, but was unsuccessful. I was able to verify the exact date of his death in the records of the police station at Tapanhin, but obtained no relevant medical information.

In February 1986 I was able to meet Chanai again (in Bangkok) and learned then of his further development.

Persons Interviewed during the Investigation

In Bangkok I interviewed:

Chanai Choomalaiwong
Somkid Choomalaiwong, Chanai's mother

In Ban Khao Sai I interviewed:

Suan Lawnak, widow of Bua Kai Lawnak
Banjong, alias Tim, one of Bua Kai's twin daughters

In Ban Khao Phra I interviewed:

Kian, Bua Kai's father
Yong, Bua Kai's mother
Sai, Bua Kai's younger brother
Wan Pen, Bua Kai's sister-in-law

In Tapanhin I interviewed:

San Am Sisawan, police officer and friend of Bua Kai

In Nong Pai I interviewed:

Prom Mayluthong, Chanai's maternal grandmother
Siri Mayluthong, Chanai's maternal uncle

Prom's husband, Dang Mayluthong, was present but said almost nothing during my interview with Prom. At its end I invited him to add anything he wished to say, but he replied that he could contribute nothing further. I think he had probably not been a witness of Chanai's statements about the previous life.

Khun Prasit Karoonyavanich interviewed all of the persons listed above, except Siri Mayluthong, Wan Pen, and San Am Sisawan. In addition, he interviewed Chanai's father, Kamron, and Bua Kai's other twin daughter, Benchaa (alias Toi).

Although I met Suan Lawnak and her daughter Tim at the latter's shop in Ban Khao Sai, Suan and her daughters lived in Ban Khao Phra, where Bua Kai's parents also lived (in 1979) and where I met them. (I met briefly Tim's twin sister, Toi, but had no effective interview with her.)

Nearly all my information about what Chanai said before the two families met derives from my interview with Prom and from the published extracts of the tape recordings that Khun Prasit made during his interview with her. Her daughter, Somkid (Chanai's mother), was poorly informed about what he had said and seemed only casually interested in the case. Members of Bua Kai's family provided some corroboration for what Prom said from their memories of what Chanai told them when he first came to meet them.

Relevant Facts of Geography and Possibilities for Normal Means of Communication between the Two Families

The case occurred in the Province of Phichit. Tapanhin is the seat for the particular amphur of Phichit with which we are concerned. Tapanhin is approximately 280 kilometers north of Bangkok. It is located on the main railway line between Bangkok and Chiangmai.

The small town of Ban Khao Sai is 23 kilometers due east of Tapanhin. Ban Khao Sai had a wat and some shops. I met Bua Kai's widow and twin daughters there in 1979. Bua Kai's parents lived in a village, Ban Khao Phra, which is about 5.5 kilometers south of Ban Khao Sai.

Nong La Korn, where Chanai was born and grew up, is 25 kilometers north of Ban Khao Sai.

In the later years of his life Bua Kai and his family lived in or near Tapanhin. At that time he was teaching at a school at Ta Paw, and he lived close enough to the school so that he went there on his bicycle. Thus Nong La Korn was almost 50 kilometers (by road) from the place where Bua Kai lived and died.

All the places I have mentioned, with the probable exception of Ban Khao Phra, were connected by bus service. Ban Khao Phra was somewhat isolated and, in 1979, was reached from Ban Khao Sai by a dirt road.

Chanai's mother, Somkid, said that she had never heard of Bua Kai before Chanai began talking about the previous life. However, her mother, Prom (who raised Chanai in childhood), was casually acquainted with Bua Kai and his wife, Suan. They had no social relationship. Prom was not acquainted with Tim and Toi, and she did not know Bua Kai's parents either. Her having to be guided to their house by Chanai indicates her ignorance of where they lived. When Bua Kai had been murdered, she learned about it, but she said that she paid no attention to the matter.

Another member of Chanai's family, his maternal uncle Siri Mayluthong, had known Bua Kai when they were children together. However, he and Bua Kai lived in different communities after they grew up, and they did not meet in adulthood. Siri Mayluthong learned of Bua Kai's murder soon after it happened. Remembering the name of his childhood friend, he went to see Bua Kai's dead body. He was then living near Tapanhin. He was not living in Nong La Korn during Chanai's childhood.

Prom's acquaintance with Suan must have been extremely slight, because Suan told me that she had no acquaintance with Chanai's family before the case developed, and she had never been to Nong La Korn, even after it developed.

Kian (Bua Kai's father) said that he and his wife used to pass through Nong La Korn (on their way to where I did not learn), but they never stopped there and knew no one there. Bua Kai's brother Sai said that he knew that Nong La Korn was about 30 kilometers away (from Ban Khao Phra), but he did not know in which direction it lay.

The Life, Death, and Character of Bua Kai Lawnak

Bua Kai Lawnak was born in Lopburi in 1926. He was the oldest child of his family. He had two younger brothers, Sai and Som Kuan, and at least two sisters.

He became a teacher and at the time of his death was teaching in a primary school at Ta Paw, which is near Tapanhin. He married a girl called Suan, and they had two sons first, Vichai and Suradej, and then twin daughters, Tim and Toi. Suan was pregnant again when Bua Kai was killed and gave birth to a daughter afterward. Bua Kai was a generous person. He was also fond of children and particularly of his twin daughters. He had the pleasant habit of bringing pieces of sugar cane for them when he came home at night. They were about 9 years old when he died.

Bua Kai was not, however, exclusively a family man. He had flirtations, if not more advanced affairs, with other women, and he seems to have had a sideline in local gangsterism, which made his owning guns more than a pastime. It was perhaps in this connection that someone had shot him in the abdomen when he was attending a fair at a temple in Ban Khao Phra; but he survived this attempt on his life.[30] He took this matter seriously, however, and it may have been the main reason why he requested a transfer from the school where he taught at the time of the assassination attempt to one at Ta Paw, near Tapanhin. However, if Bua Kai was hoping to evade a murderer he should have gone farther away than about 25 kilometers.

On the morning of January 23, 1962, Bua Kai left home to go to work at his school in Ta Paw. On the way, at a place called Wang Wa, he was shot in the head from behind, and died "on the spot." (I take this phrase to mean that he was dead before he could be brought to a hospital.) The police came and took away the body. At some time a doctor examined it, and so did several of Bua Kai's relatives, including his wife, Suan. The police then prepared the body for cremation, which was carried out at Wat Tapanhin. Bua Kai was 36 years old when he died.

It is extremely unlikely that Bua Kai saw the person who shot him. I expected to find more ample records about the police inquiry at the Police Station than were available. In the Registry Book for the date in question, the name of Nang Suan was recorded as having entered a complaint of murder with her husband given as the person killed. The place of the crime was noted. A cryptic entry stated: "Accused disappeared during investigation." The police officers at the station could not find the usual detailed records of the investigation into the murder and thought that these could have been destroyed. (Seventeen years had elapsed between the murder and my request for the records in 1979.) They were also unable to remember the name of the doctor who had pronounced Bua Kai dead. They were sure that there had been some kind of medical examination, but could find no records of it.

The police made no arrests for the murder of Bua Kai, but this was from lack of evidence, not of conjectures. Bua Kai had helped a friend in a court case, and this could have generated enmity. Bua Kai's friend, San Am Sisawan, believed that one of Bua Kai's gangster friends was settling accounts with him. A third speculation supposed that a jealous husband of a woman with whom Bua Kai had been dallying decided to put him out of the way.

The Location of the Wounds on Bua Kai. Several persons with whom I talked said that they had seen Bua Kai's wounds. Of these the most

[30]Kian told Khun Prasit that the person shooting at Bua Kai missed him. Bua Kai's brother Sai told me that Bua Kai was wounded in the abdomen, but survived. I do not understand this large discrepancy, unless it happened that members of the family wished to shelter Kian from the knowledge that his son had actually been wounded. It was after this attempt on his life that Bua Kai asked for transfer to another school district.

observant seemed to be his wife, Suan, who had also talked with the doctor who examined Bua Kai's body. According to her, the bullet had entered Bua Kai's head at the back and had come out on his forehead. (She pointed to an area just above her nose.) She said the bullet had injured Bua Kai's left eye as it exited. I asked her how she could tell at which wound the bullet had entered, and she replied that the wound at the back of the head was much smaller than that at the front. The doctor had also said that the wound at the back was the one where the bullet had entered. (Suan, however, could not recall the name of the doctor.)

Bua Kai's brother Sai said that he had seen Bua Kai's body after he had been killed. He said that the bullet had gone into the back of the head and had come out in the front near the left eye. He said (to quote from my notes): "The bullet exploded out of the face. The left eye seemed to disappear inside."

Bua Kai's father, Kian, said that he had seen his son's body after it had been prepared for cremation, but had not noticed the location of the wounds. A number of other informants—in a group at Kian's house in Ban Khao Phra—gestured toward their heads to show where Bua Kai's wounds had been. Most of them pointed to the left frontal region, but one, Bua Kai's mother, Yong, pointed toward her *right* frontal region. At the same time, she showed commendable skepticism by drawing attention to the different sites for the wounds that different informants, including herself, were indicating; she doubted the accuracy of all their memories. But they all had a consensus that Bua Kai had been shot in the head, and I believe that Suan's and Sai's observations are sufficiently similar and sufficiently in accordance with each other so that we can conclude that the bullet entered Bua Kai's head at the back and exited on his forehead close to his left eye.

Statements and Recognitions Made by Chanai

Chanai's maternal grandmother, Prom, said that his principal statements before being taken to Bua Kai's family were: that he had been a teacher, that his name was Bua Kai, that his parents were called Kian and Yong, that he had a wife, Suan, and children, that he lived at Khao Phra, and that he had been shot and killed. Prom said that Chanai also said that he was headmaster of a school at Ta Paw and had been shot from behind as he was going to school. He had given the names, Tim and Toi, of Bua Kai's twin daughters.

All but one of the foregoing statements were correct; I verified them with members of Bua Kai's family. I have not verified that Bua Kai was headmaster of his school.

Of these items Prom knew only that Bua Kai had been a teacher who was murdered and that his wife was called Suan. She did not know the other names that Chanai gave.

Chanai did not remember the names of Bua Kai's older children (his two sons, Vichai and Suradej).

Prom did not say that Chanai had drawn attention to his birthmarks by pointing to them. Later, according to Bua Kai's wife, Suan, he said that the "scars" on his head were caused by a bullet; but by this time adults must have told him about the birthmarks, and Bua Kai's family regarded them as important evidence of Chanai's claim to be the reincarnation of Bua Kai.

In Table 5-3 I have listed all the statements that Prom Mayluthong remembered Chanai to have made before she took him to meet Bua Kai's family (items 1-13). (He repeated many of the names when he met the persons he had previously mentioned, and I have listed some of them as informants for the items when I was sure they had witnessed a particular statement or one closely similar.)

In Table 5-3 I have also listed two additional statements (items 14 and 15) that Chanai made at the time of one or other of the first two meetings he had with Bua Kai's family. And I have listed four recognitions that seem to me to deserve attention.

I was told about other recognitions that Chanai had made when he met members of Bua Kai's family for the first time. However, his recognitions of Bua Kai's parents and wife were of little or no value, given that he knew he was going to a place where he expected to meet them. There were also many people present who might have guided him by crude or subtle cues. In addition, the accounts I received of just how he first met Bua Kai's parents differed in details from those Khun Prasit had obtained earlier. (I did not learn until 1986 that Bua Kai's parents had two houses, one in Ban Khao Phra and one in Ban Khao Sai. According to Prom she and Chanai met Bua Kai's parents first in Ban Khao Sai and then, a few days later, again in Ban Khao Phra.) Nevertheless, some of the exchanges between Chanai and members of Bua Kai's family, as remembered later by persons present, merit being put into this record, and I shall give some further information about them in the following paragraphs.

When Chanai and his grandmother first met Bua Kai's parents, Chanai boldly introduced himself to them as Bua Kai and called them "Father" and "Mother." They were initially skeptical when they listened to his claim to be their son reborn, but became more impressed after they had examined his birthmarks. They asked Prom to bring him back another day, which she did. On that second occasion more persons, including Bua Kai's widow, Suan, were present. Chanai was asked to give the name of Bua Kai's wife and answered: "It is Suan, of course." Someone asked Chanai whether he could recount what Bua Kai had done on the day of his death. Chanai gave a somewhat detailed reply to this question. According to Prom Mayluthong (speaking to Khun Prasit), he said:

> That morning I did my laundry. When that was done I took off the Buddha [on a neck chain] and hung it on the table. Then I went out for a shower. After breakfast I rode my bicycle to school. I forgot to put my Buddha chain back on my neck, and I also forgot my pistol. If I had not forgotten them on that day, they would have been stolen too.

Table 5-3 **Summary of Statements and Recognitions Made by Chanai**

Item	*Informants*	*Verification*	*Comments*
1. He lived at [Ban] Khao Phra.	Prom Mayluthong, Chanai's maternal grandmother	Kian, Bua Kai's father Yong, Bua Kai's mother	Bua Kai had lived at Khao Phra, but was living at Tapanhin when he died.
2. His name was Bua Kai.	Prom Mayluthong	Suan Lawnak, Bua Kai's widow	
3. He had a wife there.	Prom Mayluthong	Suan Lawnak	Suan had been at Tapanhin when Bua Kai died, but she later returned to Ban Khao Sai, not far from Ban Khao Phra.
4. His wife was called Suan.	Prom Mayluthong Suan Lawnak	Suan Lawnak	
5. He had twin daughters called Toi and Tim.	Prom Mayluthong	Suan Lawnak Banjong, alias Tim, one of Bua Kai's twin daughters	
6. His father was called Kian.	Prom Mayluthong Kian	Kian	
7. His mother was called Yong.	Prom Mayluthong Kian	Yong	
8. He was a schoolteacher.	Prom Mayluthong Suan Lawnak	Suan Lawnak	

9. He was headmaster of the school.	Prom Mayluthong	Unverified	
10. He was on his way to school when he was shot.	Prom Mayluthong Suan Lawnak	Suan Lawnak	Chanai made this statement to Suan when he first met her.
11. The school was called Tapor.	Prom Mayluthong	Suan Lawnak	
12. He was shot at the back of the head.	Prom Mayluthong	Probable, but not verified independently	Suan Lawnak said that a doctor who examined Bua Kai's body said the bullet had entered at the back of the head.
13. He had a rifle and a pistol.	Prom Mayluthong Wan Pen, Bua Kai's sister-in-law	Wan Pen Kian	Wan Pen recalled that Chanai said he had revolvers; she did not mention a rifle. I did not verify independently that Bua Kai had possessed a rifle. Prom said Bua Kai's parents had confirmed that Bua Kai had had a rifle. My informants in Bua Kai's family said he had revolvers.
14. He had a necklace with three amulets.	Kian Prom Mayluthong	Kian Prom Mayluthong	Prom Mayluthong said she saw this necklace, and I understood from her that the amulets were still attached to it. However, Kian said that two of the original three amulets had been removed by Bua Kai's sons. He said that this angered Chanai.

Table 5-3 *(continued)*

Item	*Informants*	*Verification*	*Comments*
			The translator of Khun Prasit's interviews used the word *chain* instead of necklace, but I am sure the same object was meant.
15. He had a medical kit.	Wan Pen	Wan Pen Kian	This was a medical kit Bua Kai used for first aid at the school where he taught.
16. Recognition of Bua Kai's gunbelt	Prom Mayluthong		Bua Kai's mother fetched and showed Chanai five or six gunbelts and asked him to pick out Bua Kai's. Chanai did this unhesitatingly. I did not corroborate this recognition from Yong.
17. Recognition of place in Ban Khao Phra where Bua Kai had been (nonfatally) shot	Kian		This recognition occurred during one of Chanai's later visits to Bua Kai's family.
18. Recognition of Bua Kai's twin daughter Tim	Tim		I do not know where this recognition took place. Chanai gave Tim's name and identified himself to her as her father.
19. Recognition of San Am Sisawan	San Am Sisawan, friend of Bua Kai		Chanai made this recognition at Ban Khao Sai when he was between 5 and 6 years old. Chanai was with Bua Kai's twin daughters, Tim and Toi. They noticed

San Am Sisawan, called him over toward Chanai, and asked Chanai whether he knew this man. Chanai said: "Yes, his name is San Am." He said he and San Am had been friends.
Chanai had never met San Am before this occasion.

Asked what kind of guns Bua Kai owned, Chanai said: "I had one rifle and one pistol"[31] (item 13). Asked whether Bua Kai was shot going *to* his school or coming *from* it, Chanai said: "He shot me when I was on the way to school." Asked whether he could think of anything else that had belonged to Bua Kai, Chanai said: "I still have a chain full of Buddha [images]. He was then asked how many images were on the chain, and he answered: "I had three Buddhas, called Nang Phaya." In her account of this episode to me Prom said that Chanai did not say the word *three*, but held up three fingers (item 14). Prom told me that she had been shown the chain mentioned above with three Buddha images on it.

Chanai asked about a small medical bag that Bua Kai had used for first aid at the school where he taught (item 15), and Kian told me that Chanai went to a room in the upstairs of the house and found the kit.

He also went around the house pointing out various changes that had been made in it since Bua Kai's death, such as pieces of furniture and books that were missing.

I did not learn the details of how Chanai made all the recognitions credited to him, but Prom included in her statement details about the one that had impressed her and Bua Kai's family most of all. Bua Kai's mother (Yong) brought out five or six gun and cartridge belts and said to Chanai that if he could pick out which had belonged to Bua Kai, she would accept him as her son reborn, but otherwise not. Prom recalled later that this basing an acceptance of Chanai's claims on a single test made her fear that he would fail it and that they would be accused of hoaxing.[32] While she was absorbed in these alarming conjectures, Chanai unhesitatingly picked a belt with three cartridges in it and said: "Mother, this is my belt" (item 16). This moved Yong to tears, and some other relatives also. Yong then began reproaching Chanai for not being reborn in their family and asked him why he went so far away. Chanai disclaimed responsibility and managed somehow with his vocabulary of a 3½-year-old child to explain that we cannot choose where we shall be reborn. (I did not obtain Yong's account of this recognition and subsequent conversation.)

Three other recognitions (and associated statements) all occurred on occasions after Chanai's first two visits to Bua Kai's parents. Bua Kai's father, Kian,

[31]This may not have been Bua Kai's complete arsenal. Other informants mentioned that Chanai referred to pistols, implying that Bua Kai had had at least two of them.

[32]Persons concerned in these cases sometimes challenge the subjects to make particular recognitions or answer specific questions about private family matters. This is not unfair by itself; but the questioners sometimes allow the subject's answers to such test questions to affect their judgment about the entire case without stopping to think that the content of the challenge may be of more interest to the questioner than to the subject or than it would have been to the previous personality.

In fairness to members of Bua Kai's family, I should add that they attached much importance to Chanai's birthmarks, and their correspondence with Bua Kai's wounds appears to have influenced some of them as much as any of Chanai's statements or recognitions.

said that Chanai once took him and his wife to the temple in Ban Khao Phra and showed them the spot where Bua Kai had been shot the first time an attempt was made on his life (item 17).

Chanai met Bua Kai's twin daughters, Tim first and Toi later. When he first met Tim, he seemed happy and close to tears. He asked her whether she could remember him and said that he was her father. Tim became annoyed at hearing this from a boy of 3½. Chanai insisted and mentioned several other persons in a way that impressed Tim, but did not fully remove her doubts. Tim told me that Chanai had stated both her name and that of her sister (item 18). He asked for Toi, who was not present. Later, Tim took Chanai to meet Toi, and he immediately asked Toi whether she had stopped being so sensitive. According to Tim, Toi had been and still was extremely prickly. (Kian told me that Chanai had made a somewhat similar remark with regard to Bua Kai's mother. He asked whether she was still a nag, which it seems she had been.)

I learned of the third recognition in this later group from San Am Sisawan, a friend of Bua Kai whom Chanai recognized when they first met (item 19). This took place at Ban Khao Sai, and San Am thought that Chanai was between 5 and 6 years old at the time. One of the twins, whom Chanai was visiting at the time, called San Am over and asked Chanai whether he knew this man. Chanai said that his name was San Am and that they were friends. He said nothing else, perhaps because there were many people around and he had become shy.

Chanai's Statements about Events Occurring after Bua Kai's Death and before His Birth. According to Prom, Chanai was asked (during his second visit to Ban Khao Sai) where Bua Kai had been cremated, and he replied: "They took me to Wat Tapanhin, where else?" At the same visit Chanai gave the following account of what else he remembered of events after Bua Kai's death. I cite this in the words of Prom as she remembered what he said during her interview with Khun Prasit in 1978:

> They punished me by forcing me to take off all my clothes and took me to a huge lotus pond. They then forced me to walk through the jungle of lotus. I experienced great pain and discomfort for a long time until I reached the edge of the pond [presumably on the way back]. They gave me my clothes back at that time. Two men accompanied me for a distance and said that they could come only so far and that I was to be reborn now. Then I was unconscious after that.

In 1978 Khun Prasit asked Chanai what he remembered about being shot and dying. Chanai said:

> I don't know who shot me, because he shot me from the back. I was not conscious when I died. Afterwards though, I felt my soul leaving the body. I could see myself lying on the road. My legs were still twitching. My blood was running onto the road.

When Khun Prasit asked him where he went after viewing his body, he replied:

> I went to see many places. I cannot remember now where I went.

He did not mention the cremation of Bua Kai's body to Khun Prasit.

During one of my interviews with him in 1979, Chanai recalled looking down on his body and noticing the legs trembling.

Comment. Chanai's apparent memories of events after Bua Kai's death resemble in some respects accounts of other subjects and differ in other respects. For example, Thai subjects more commonly remember being taken in hand by *one* discarnate person—the "man-in-white"—not by two (Stevenson, 1983a).

Chanai's report of a sensation of "great pain and discomfort" suggests the unpleasant condition of a *preta*, which certain persons, according to Buddhism, become after dying.[33]

Chanai's Behavior Related to the Previous Life

Circumstances and Manner of Chanai's Speaking about the Previous Life. From the age of about 3, when he first began to refer to the previous life, Chanai seems to have talked almost incessantly about it until his grandmother went with him to Ban Khao Sai to meet Bua Kai's family. He sometimes cried when he asked to go to them.

Chanai told Khun Prasit that his grandmother became so annoyed with his repeated demands to go to Bua Kai's family that she threatened to punish him if he did not desist. He said that he missed his (previous) parents and family so much that he did not care about the punishment and so kept on asking to be allowed to go to them. Eventually, as we have seen, Prom agreed. Chanai did not say that she had in fact ever punished him for talking about the previous life.

When it came to persons other than his grandmother, Chanai talked only with those who seemed safe confidants. In 1979 he told me that he never discussed his memories with his mother (on her brief visits from Bangkok to Nong La Korn). He did discuss them with some other children, such as his classmates at school. And once when his father came to visit him at Nong La Korn, he told him about the memories. However, this was only after his first visit to Ban Khao

[33]In the report of the case of Som Pit Hancharoen I listed some other subjects who have said they remembered events on an intermediate plane of existence after death in the previous life.

Pretas are regarded as detained near the place of death and often depicted as hungry and thirsty. One function of the paritta ceremony is to release the preta for a better life in a discarnate realm or another terrestrial rebirth. I have given elsewhere some further information about pretas and the paritta ceremony, especially in my reports of the cases of Maung Aye Kyaw and the Ven. U Sobhana.

Sai. With other people, he tended to keep quiet because he found that they laughed at him.

Chanai had no dreams or nightmares related to the previous life.

Chanai's Play at Teaching. Chanai's playing at teaching was the occasion for Prom's first knowledge that Chanai was remembering a previous life. Chanai himself (in 1979) remembered how he had played at teaching when he had been younger and had ordered playmates to bring him paper he needed for the teaching.[34]

Chanai's Interest in Guns. Chanai had no phobia of guns; on the contrary, he was interested in them. In 1979 he told me that he liked guns and that he wished to become a policeman when he grew up. He said that he might also like to be a soldier. (He did not wish to be a teacher.) When I asked him why he wished to be a soldier, he said that he liked to shoot and also he could protect himself. When I asked him whether Bua Kai liked to shoot, he said, perhaps with a little evasion, that Bua Kai just had guns for protection.

Chanai's Attitude toward Bua Kai's Murderer. During Chanai's talk with Bua Kai's friend San Am Sisawan (when Chanai was between 5 and 6 years old), Chanai said that he knew the name of the man who had shot Bua Kai, but would not tell what it was. He showed an angry attitude toward the man, so that San Am thought Chanai was thinking of taking revenge for Bua Kai's murder. However, in 1978 Chanai told Khun Prasit that he did not know who had shot Bua Kai because he was shot from behind. Yet when, about 6 months later, I asked Chanai whether he would like to find Bua Kai's murderer, he said that this man had already been killed by the police. The police had told him this, and he believed it. He also told me that he did not remember the name of the murderer.

Some persons may have worried that Chanai *would* remember the name of the murderer. Prom told Khun Prasit that a friend of hers who sold in the market—she did not mention which market—had been approached by a stranger who inquired about Chanai, apparently eager to learn more about what he was saying. Prom's friend told him that the story (of Chanai's memories) was true, and the stranger asked whether Chanai knew the name of the man who had shot Bua Kai. Prom's friend told him that Chanai did not know and asked her interrogator what he would do if Chanai did know the name of the murderer. At this, the man became uneasy and hurriedly left. Sometime later Prom heard that this man—whom her friend must somehow have identified—had been picked up by the police. In the meantime Prom had been sufficiently concerned about Chanai's safety to send him down to Bangkok for a time, and she brought him back to Nong La Korn only when she learned that the police had arrested the man who had shown undue curiosity about what Chanai knew.

[34]Lalitha Abeyawardena was another subject who remembered the previous life of a teacher and played, as a young child, at being a teacher.

Comment. It seems probable that Chanai, like the police, had conjectures about the identity of Bua Kai's murderer. He may have been right in saying to San Am Sisawan (in about 1973) that he knew the murderer's name, and right also in telling Khun Prasit and me a few years later that he did not. He could easily have forgotten the name in the meantime.

As for the police, they might have told Chanai that they had killed the murderer in order to allay concerns that he may have shared with them. It is also possible that they killed the suspect either in an ordinary shoot-out or as an act of summary justice. It is known that the police in Thailand—as elsewhere, to be sure—sometimes kill criminals when they are sure that they have caught the perpetrator of a crime, but lack sufficient evidence for conviction in a court trial.

Chanai's Attitudes toward Members of Bua Kai's Family. As mentioned earlier, Chanai called Bua Kai's parents "Father" and "Mother." He similarly expected Bua Kai's twin daughters, Tim and Toi, to address him as "Father." By the time they met the 3-year-old Chanai in 1970 they were 17 years old. Conscious of their seniority, they tried calling Chanai "little nephew," but he would have none of that and told them that if they did not call him "Father," he would not talk to them. Eventually Tim and Toi capitulated. Not so Sai, Bua Kai's younger brother, who was headman of Ban Khao Phra. He stood on his dignity and would not accord Chanai adult status; accordingly, Chanai tended to avoid him when he was in Ban Khao Phra.

I said earlier that Bua Kai found monogamy somewhat limiting, and he had girlfriends after he married. As a reflection of this, Suan once sarcastically said to Chanai: "I wonder if you will be a playboy again in this life." Chanai replied: "I have had enough. No more." Chanai also showed jealousy concerning Suan on at least one occasion. San Am Sisawan asked him how he would feel if Suan should marry again, and Chanai became annoyed at the suggestion. (In fact, she had not remarried up to 1979, although not necessarily because she was afraid of offending Chanai.)

Chanai showed an adult attitude in other matters also. When he came to visit Kian and Yong in Ban Khao Phra, he behaved, in the words of Kian, "as if he was very much at home. He looked for Bua Kai's things in every corner of the house. He was not afraid of anybody." Once when Chanai noticed some of Bua Kai's possessions missing and commented on their absence, Suan said: "Well, you were not there to use them so I gave them away to needy persons." Chanai then generously replied: "That is all right if you gave them away." On another occasion he was less indulgent. He asked about a pair of jeans that Bua Kai had obtained not long before his death and had never worn. Suan said that she had herself used them until they had become worn out. On hearing this, Chanai grumbled, saying that whatever he had Suan always used for herself. Chanai asked for a necklace of Bua Kai's that had three amulets attached. When the necklace was produced, only one amulet remained, because Bua Kai's sons had removed two, and this angered Chanai (item 14 of Table 5-3).

Chanai's adult attitude must have had an imperiousness to which other children responded submissively. Prom told Khun Prasit that she had learned—appar-

ently from Bua Kai's mother, Yong—that at the house in Ban Khao Phra, Chanai would order children of the house who were his own age to clean and wash the floor for Yong; and they did. These children were Bua Kai's nephews, and they respectfully addressed Chanai as "Uncle."[35]

Chanai continued visiting Bua Kai's family after the first two visits he made with Prom. He came sometimes with Prom, but he made other visits entirely on his own, one when he was about 4 years old. He took a bus from Nong La Korn and told the bus driver where to let him off. When he made these covert visits, he would say that he did not wish to leave Ban Khao Phra. His grandmother would come after him and take him back to Nong La Korn.

For some years he visited Ban Khao Phra often. Sometimes he stayed at the house of Bua Kai's parents, once for more than a month. It was noticed that when he came to visit Tim and Toi, he brought them pieces of sugar cane as Bua Kai had done when they were much younger.

The Attitudes of the Adults Concerned in the Case

Prom, to judge by her statement to Khun Prasit, was initially skeptical about the likelihood that Chanai was remembering a real previous life. She postponed taking him to Ban Khao Sai until she could bear his demands no longer; and she went there fearful that he would make a fool of himself and thereby of her also. When he did not, she became relieved and accepted Chanai's statements as expressing memories of Bua Kai's life.

After their initial doubts, the members of Bua Kai's family fully accepted Chanai as Bua Kai reborn. The correspondence between Chanai's birthmarks and Bua Kai's wounds seems to have been important in influencing them to believe that he was Bua Kai reborn. I have already mentioned that Tim and Toi began calling him "Father," and Suan said that she called him either "Por Vichai" (meaning Vichai's father; Vichai was Bua Kai's and her older son) or "Por Deg" (meaning children's father). When he came to visit, she prepared food that Bua Kai had liked.

The attachment of Bua Kai's family to Chanai became so strong that there was talk for a time of their adopting Chanai, but Prom ruled against giving up a child she loved as much as she did Chanai.

After Tim and Toi became established in business at Ban Khao Sai (where they had a combined dressmaking shop and beauty salon), they owned a car and would sometimes drive out to pick up Chanai and bring him to Bua Kai's parents.

[35]What I call an "adult attitude" occurs sometimes among subjects who remember having been heads of families or persons of authority. Examples occurred in the cases of the Ven. Chaokhun Rajsuthajarn, Suleyman Andary, and Hair Kam Kanya. In the present work the case of Maung Aung Than provides another good example of an adult attitude.

Frequent visits continued up to the time of Khun Prasit's interviews for the case in the late summer of 1978. Then in November 1978 the visits stopped, apparently on the instructions of Kamron, Chanai's father. This is what Chanai told Bua Kai's children when they asked him why he was no longer visiting them. I did not meet Kamron and do not know why he had changed his stance (in November 1978) regarding the exchanges of visits between the families. In talking with Khun Prasit 2 months earlier, he had seemed entirely in favor of them. If he had become concerned about the possibly undesirable effect on Chanai of double loyalties, he would have been like some other parents of subjects of these cases who have found themselves faced with similar dilemmas.

Chanai's Birthmarks

Prom told me that she noticed Chanai's two birthmarks at the time of his birth. She said one had been on the left side of his forehead near the hairline and the other at the back of his head. The birthmarks looked like scars and were hairless. They were not bleeding or oozing.

Somkid said that Chanai's birthmarks had become larger since his birth, but Prom said that they had not. She attributed their not increasing in size to a ritual she had carried out on the advice of the abbot of a nearby wat. Birthmarks are apparently not common in that part of Thailand, and Chanai's became a sight to see for many persons of the area around Nong La Korn.

Somkid also said that Chanai's birthmarks had not changed position (in relation to other anatomical landmarks) since his birth. Here again other informants disagreed with her. Kian said (in 1979) that he thought the posterior birthmark had not shifted in position, but that the anterior one had. He said that it was formerly on the forehead and therefore lower than it was in 1979. His wife, Yong, agreed with him. (They were making comparisons between the appearances of the birthmarks when they first met Chanai at the age of 3½ and their appearance in his later childhood.) Furthermore, Suan, who was an important witness for the location of Bua Kai's wounds, remarked that both of Chanai's birthmarks (presumably meaning when she had last seen them, which would have been in 1978) were higher up than (superior to) the wounds on Bua Kai. I have already mentioned that Somkid seemed to me an uninformed and even indifferent witness to her son's case. I do not think she paid much more attention to his birthmarks than she did to his statements and associated behavior related to the previous life. A comparison of Figures 5-9 and 5-12 shows that the posterior birthmark had shifted in location during the years between 1979 and 1986. I believe, therefore, that the birthmarks on Chanai, like those on some other subjects, had shifted in relation to neighboring anatomical landmarks during his childhood.

Figures 5-9 and 5-11 show Chanai's birthmarks as they appeared in March 1979, when he was 11½ years old. The posterior and smaller one was located in the left parietal area. It was almost exactly round in shape and about 5 millimeters in diameter. It was puckered, hairless, and hyperpigmented. The anterior birthmark

was located in the left frontal region. It was elongated and measured about 2 centimeters by 5 millimeters in area. It also was scarred, hairless, and hyperpigmented.

I believe that the posterior birthmark corresponds to the bullet wound of entry in Bua Kai. Figure 5-10 shows a bullet wound of entry on the back of the head of a person murdered in Virginia. The wound is round and about 8-9 millimeters in diameter. The anterior birthmark on Chanai approximately corresponds (with allowance for some shifting) to the bullet wound of exit on Bua Kai. Exit wounds are usually larger than entry wounds, and Chanai's anterior birthmark is appreciably larger than the posterior one. The different sizes of Chanai's two birthmarks are harmonious with the evidence we have about Bua Kai's wounds which warrants our believing that Bua Kai had been shot from behind.

Chanai said (in 1979) that he had headaches at the site of his birthmarks when he talked about the previous life.[36] He had such a pain on the day when he first talked with me in March 1979. He had never complained of head pain to his mother, but then he had also told her nothing about the memories of a previous life that he had.

Chanai's Later Development

In 1978 Chanai was attending the school at Wat Khao Sai and was in the fifth grade. I did not learn what school he was attending in 1979, but it was presumably one in Nong Pai, where his grandmother Prom had moved sometime between the summer of 1978 and March 1979.

When I asked Chanai in 1979 about the preservation or fading of his memories, he said that he remembered some details and had forgotten others. Our further conversation confirmed this. He had forgotten, for example, the place where Bua Kai was shot, and he wrongly placed this in Ban Khao Phra. (This was understandable perhaps, because someone had once tried to kill Bua Kai while he was attending a fair in that area.) It was difficult to credit Chanai's other and correct statements as original imaged memories, because by 1979 he had had many opportunities to learn normally, and many reasons to remember, the names of all of Bua Kai's family.

Earlier I drew attention to the reports by several informants of Chanai's adult attitude. He showed this to some extent during my first two meetings with him. For a boy of 11, he was remarkably poised and self-confident. He was present during my interview with his mother, Somkid, and when she faltered or in his opinion made a mistake, he intervened with appropriate comments. There was nothing impolite about his remarks; he spoke with quiet authority as one knowing some things better than his mother did. Khun Prasit had noted and recorded similar observations of Chanai's adult attitude in 1978.

[36]Other subjects who have developed physical symptoms, for example pain or fever, when they talked about previous lives include Salem Andary, Shiv Shankar Sengar, Ma Tin Yee, Marta Lorenz, Ma Mu Mu, and Sunita Singh.

Figure 5-9 Posterior birthmark on the head of Chanai Choomalaiwong as it appeared in March 1979, when he was 11½ years old. It was a round, puckered, hairless area of hyperpigmentation, approximately 0.5 centimeter in diameter. This birthmark corresponded to the bullet wound of entry on Bua Kai.

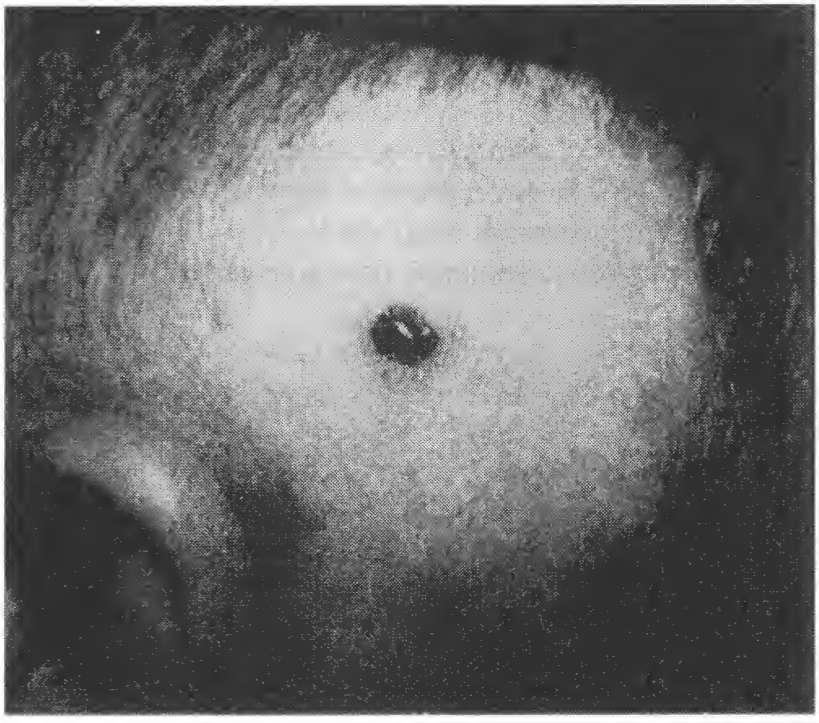

Figure 5-10 Bullet wound of entry in the head of a person murdered in Virginia. (Courtesy of Dr. David Wiecking.)

Figure 5-11 Anterior birthmark on Chanai's head in March 1979. It was a hairless, puckered area of hyperpigmentation. It was about 2 centimeters long and 0.5 centimeter wide. This birthmark approximately corresponded (with allowance for some shifting) to the bullet wound of exit on Bua Kai.

In February 1986 I met Chanai again in Bangkok. He was then 18. (He had married the year before, and his attractive wife came with him to meet me.)

Chanai had continued in school to the ninth grade of secondary school. He had then transferred to a Vocational Training School, where he had trained to become a telephone lineman. When we met in 1986, he was working as a lineman for the Telephone Authority of Thailand.

Chanai said that he still remembered some details of the previous life, but had lost other memories. He remembered the parents, wife, and children of the previous life; he did not remember how Bua Kai had died. He had not exchanged any visits with Bua Kai's family "for many years," probably since his father had first objected to such visits in 1978.

I examined Chanai's birthmarks again and found that they had become closer together during the 7 years since I had last seen them. Photographs of the birthmarks were taken in May/June of 1986 (I do not know the exact date) and sent to me. They show that the anterior birthmark (Figure 5-13) was at approximately the location it had in 1979. However, the posterior birthmark had moved; whereas in 1979 it was definitely behind a line between the ears, in 1986 it was at about that

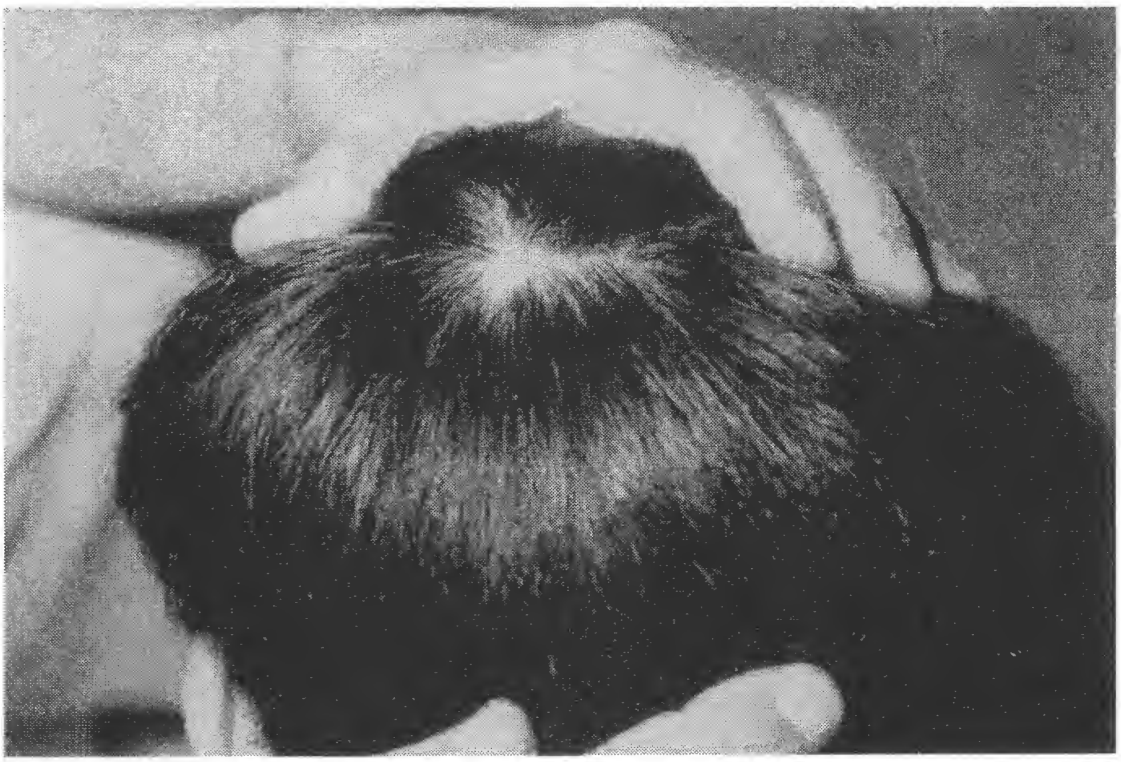

Figure 5-12 Posterior birthmark on head of Chanai in the late spring of 1986, when he was 18 years old. Compared with its position at the time of Figure 5-9, the birthmark was farther forward on the head.

Figure 5-13 Anterior birthmark on head of Chanai in the late spring of 1986. The mark is poorly visible in this photograph and appears only as an elongated area of hairlessness.

line and almost at the summit of the head (Figure 5-12). The posterior birthmark seemed to be slightly larger in 1986 than it had been in 1979, and it was no longer darker than the surrounding skin. It consisted of a round hairless area approximately 6 millimeters in diameter. The anterior birthmark (not well seen in the photograph) was about 1 centimeter long and 3 millimeters wide. (It was therefore appreciably smaller than it had been in 1979.) It was red and slightly elevated. It also was a hairless area, but no longer seemed puckered.

THE CASE OF MAUNG TIN WIN

Summary of the Case and Its Investigation

Maung Tin Win was born in 1954 in the village of Moenangone, near Pyawbwe in Upper Burma. His parents were U Khin Maung and Daw Unt. U Khin Maung was Daw Unt's third husband. He was a cultivator and gardener specializing in grapes and betel leaves. Daw Unt had had one child (a son) by her first husband, and one (a daughter who died in infancy) by her second husband. Maung Tin Win was the oldest of five children (two boys and three girls) that she had with U Khin Maung.

Before she became pregnant with Maung Tin Win, Daw Unt had a dream about her second husband, U Thet Tin, which I shall describe later. When Maung Tin Win was born, he was found to have three birthmarks (Figures 5-14, 5-15, and 5-16), which I shall also describe later.

Maung Tin Win began to speak clearly when he was about 1½ years old, and he started referring to a previous life when he was about 2. He claimed then to have been U Thet Tin (Daw Unt's second husband), who had been a notorious dacoit (brigand). U Thet Tin had been killed at Moenangone village in June 1953. During the period when Maung Tin Win talked most about the life of U Thet Tin, he also showed behavior that was unusual for his family but characteristic of U Thet Tin.

The case first came to my attention through my associate in Upper Burma, U Nu. One of his relatives who lived in Moenangone told him about the case, and he went to the village to study it in March 1979. He interviewed Maung Tin Win (who was then 25 years old), both his parents, and two other informants in the village. Subsequently, Daw Hnin Aye translated U Nu's notes for me, and I have used them in compiling this report.

On April 1, 1979, I went to Moenangone with U Win Maung and U Nu. U Khin Maung was not in the village, but we met and interviewed Maung Tin Win, Daw Unt, and one of the villagers whom U Nu had previously interviewed, U Than Maung.

As often happens in the investigation of these cases, I later assembled a list of questions about details that required further inquiry. In February 1984 Daw Hnin Aye went to Moenangone and obtained answers to nearly all my questions from Daw Unt. She also met U Khin Maung and Daw Tin Kyi (Daw Unt's sister).

Persons Interviewed during the Investigation

In Moenangone we interviewed:

Maung Tin Win (also interviewed separately by U Nu)
Daw Unt, Maung Tin Win's mother (also interviewed separately by U Nu and by Daw Hnin Aye)
U Khin Maung, Maung Tin Win's father (interviewed only by U Nu and, separately, by Daw Hnin Aye)
U Than Maung, villager (also interviewed separately by U Nu)
U Pho Kyi, schoolteacher (interviewed only by U Nu)
Daw Tin Kyi, Daw Unt's sister (interviewed only by Daw Hnin Aye)

All firsthand witnesses of the wounds on U Thet Tin's body had died or moved out of Moenangone by the time of our study of the case. However, two secondhand witnesses gave adequately concordant testimony about the location of the wounds.

Relevant Geographical Information

Moenangone is a village 4 kilometers south of Pyawbwe in Upper Burma. It had a population of about 2,000 persons in 1979. Of the two other villages figuring in this case, Magyibin is just south of Pyawbwe, about 3 kilometers north of Moenangone; and Zidaw is about 0.6 kilometer west of Moenangone.

The Life, Death, and Character of U Thet Tin

U Thet Tin was born at Zidaw, in Upper Burma, in 1917. He worked as a cultivator, but also had a sideline in dacoity, as brigandage is called in India and Burma. He was fond of drinking alcohol and also of gambling.

U Thet Tin fell in love with Daw Unt, who was then living at Magyibin with her first husband, U Ba Khin. Not recognizing U Ba Khin as a serious impediment to his desires, U Thet Tin simply removed Daw Unt to his own home in Zidaw. (U Ba Khin subsequently died.) About 1½ years later, U Thet Tin and Daw Unt moved from Zidaw to Moenangone, and they were living there when he died.

The insurgency that disrupted most of Burma during the first half of the 1950s offered an unexpected opportunity for dacoits. (See Appendix B.) It would be wrong to say that none of the dacoits in Burma who joined the Communist insurgents did so for ideological reasons; and even some of the more cynical dacoits could persuade themselves that Communism promised to redistribute the wealth on a large scale, as dacoits had been doing all along on a small scale. Moreover, the raiding and looting practiced by dacoits provided excellent training for the somewhat similar tactics adopted by the Communist insurgents.

However, U Thet Tin did not join the Communists. He acquired a Sten gun from a man who had defected from the Communists and formed his own band.

For a time they constituted a semiofficial "Village Defense Force" that was nominally controlled by the Deputy Commissioner at Yamethin, the nearest administrative center of the Burmese Government.

Soon U Thet Tin and his band were unable to resist using their weapons for their own gain, and they engaged in ordinary dacoity. They robbed and killed almost by whim. If they caught anyone who informed against them, they would kill him instantly; but they killed other persons with little provocation, almost casually. U Than Maung, who was living in Moenangone during the period of U Thet Tin's dacoity, said of him: "He was a cruel man. He raped virgins and married women alike....He committed dacoity and murdered many people. We dared not report [him] to [the] government forces because we were afraid he would kill us. He always killed those who reported him. He nicknamed himself 'Napoleon,' and then other people called him 'Napoleon.'"

The Communists would have liked to capture U Thet Tin, but his village was too close to an area controlled by the government. The government also wanted him and offered a reward of 2,000 kyats for him, dead or alive.

Eventually, in 1953 the Communists did capture U Thet Tin and took him to one of their camps. However, he managed to kill his two guards and escape with their rifles. He regained Moenangone with difficulty, and he was so grateful for his escape that he decided to give thanks to the gods who had helped him with a ceremony that was half-celebration, half-thanksgiving. This event was underway (10 days after his escape from the Communists) when he learned that government troops had unexpectedly surrounded the village and entered it. U Thet Tin was unarmed at the time and started to run for his gun, but was shot in the knee and fell to the ground. He then got up and was again trying to get away when a second shot hit him in the abdomen.

We have not been able to meet anyone who was a firsthand witness of the wounds U Thet Tin received. Daw Unt witnessed her husband's shooting, or came to its scene almost immediately afterward. U Thet Tin saw her as he lay wounded on the ground and beckoned to her to come to him; but he was surrounded by government troops, and she was afraid to approach. He died about half an hour after being shot. The government troops had his body carted away and disposed of. Daw Unt never saw her husband's body after he died. The cartman who took away the body told her that he had been wounded in the right knee and the lower part of the abdomen.[37]

[37]The English word first used in translating the Burmese expression for the location of the wound was *bladder*. When I inquired whether such a precise location was described, I learned that the Burmese words used mean "lower abdomen," the part known to anatomists as the hypogastrium.

In the text I have given Daw Unt's statement about the location of the wounds to U Nu in March 1979. About a week later, in April, when U Win Maung and I interviewed her and asked about the location of the wounds, she mentioned only one "on the thigh." At that time I had not yet seen U Nu's notes, and he, who was with us in April, did not notice the discrepancy in her testimony.

U Than Maung had been living in Moenangone at the time the government troops raided it and shot U Thet Tin. He also did not look at U Thet Tin's body, being afraid that if he approached it, the government troops might arrest him to use as a witness. He learned from someone, however, that U Thet Tin had been shot in the knee and in the "lower abdomen."

U Thet Tin was 36 years old when he died.

After U Thet Tin's death, Daw Unt married a member of U Thet Tin's band, U Khin Maung. They continued to live at Moenangone, and, as I have mentioned, Maung Tin Win was their first child.

An Announcing Dream

Shortly before she became pregnant with Maung Tin Win, Daw Unt dreamed of U Thet Tin. In the dream, U Thet Tin said that he was coming to protect her. Daw Unt said that this was not possible because he was dead. U Thet Tin, repeating, said: "No. I am coming to protect you." He then remained with her in the dream for some time longer, but there was no further dialogue before Daw Unt awakened. She had this dream only once.

Statements Made by Maung Tin Win

According to Daw Unt, Maung Tin Win's first utterances about the previous life occurred when he said that he wanted Daw Unt. (This seemed somewhat odd, since Daw Unt was his own mother. She thought [later, in 1979] that at his age at the time—2 to 3 years old—he had not recognized her as from the previous life. She also thought that perhaps he had vaguely recognized her and yet was doubtful and hesitated to claim her as his previous wife.) He said that he had been shot dead, and he pointed to his birthmarks as he said this to indicate where he had been shot in the previous life. He also recalled that after being shot he had called for Daw Unt to come to him.

When Maung Tin Win was between 3 and 4 years old, he picked up a photograph of U Thet Tin and said that it was of himself. On other occasions later, he would say that he was U Thet Tin.

I obtained the foregoing information about Maung Tin Win's statements from Daw Unt. U Than Maung added some information about additional statements. He did not know Maung Tin Win until he was an older child, but he had learned about what he had said when younger, and he seemed reliable as a secondhand reporter of additional statements Maung Tin Win had then made. According to him, Maung Tin Win had described some of U Thet Tin's activities—presumably dacoity, but he did not mention this specifically—and how he had died. He said that when Maung Tin Win had been asked to name the members of the band of insurgents that he led, he could do so correctly. Some of the members of U Thet Tin's band had lived in Moenangone, as he had himself, and were still there when Maung Tin Win began talking about the previous life. U Than

Maung said that Maung Tin Win inquired about two persons who had formerly lived at Moenangone, but were no longer there at that time. Maung Tin Win had never met them, and U Than Maung was certain that he could never have even heard about them.

Maung Tin Win's Statements in April 1979. We cannot regard what Maung Tin Win said he remembered in 1979 as evidence that he had the same memories when he was a young child. However, I hope readers will share my interest in his statements about his memories of the previous life and how they first came to him. I quote from U Nu's notes of what he said in March 1979:

> Nobody ever told me about my previous life. I did not dream...about it.
>
> One day, when I was about 3 or 4 years of age, I looked up at the snapshot of Ko[38] Thet Tin and suddenly remembered my previous life.
>
> Someone put the snapshot of Ko Thet Tin in my hand, and my memory became clear. I asked where Ma[39] Unt was. They asked me what I was going to do with Ma Unt. I told them Ma Unt was my wife. Ma Unt (now my mother) asked me what I was going to do with Ma Unt. I replied that I remembered Ma Unt and was feeling lonely for her. Suddenly, I knew that my mother was my previous wife.
>
> People asked me some questions about my previous life. Some believed me and some did not. On rainy days I wanted to be alone with my thoughts.[40] I felt very lonely. I preferred to talk about my previous life with my friends.

Maung Tin Win also described to U Nu memories he still had of how U Thet Tin died:

> There was a Nat Pwe [a type of celebration, offered to local spirits] going on, with a Burmese orchestra, in my compound. I took my cock and started a cock fight with another cock. Suddenly, there was a commotion, and I saw uniformed persons in my compound. I ran to my house with the intention of getting my Sten gun. One person pointed me out as "Thet Tin." An armed person fired at my right knee and I fell down. I got up and tried to run away. Another shot hit me in the abdomen. I looked back and found my wife, Ma Unt, in the crowd. I beckoned to her to come to me, and then I fell down.

[38]Maung Tin Win used the familiar word *Ko* instead of the more formal honorific *U* in referring to U Thet Tin.

[39]Maung Tin Win referred to Daw Unt with the honorific *Ma* customarily used with girls and young women of lesser social status than that of those who are addressed as *Daw*.

[40]Here occurred another reference—common in Burmese cases—to a tendency for the subjects to remember the previous life more on rainy days than on sunny ones. I mentioned this feature in the report of the case of Maung Myint Aung in Chapter 4.

When U Win Maung and I talked with Maung Tin Win himself in April 1979, he said that he retained some memories of the previous life, but had lost most of them. He attributed this to accidents that he had had when younger. He had fallen from a tree and had also been scalded.

Maung Tin Win's Behavior Related to the Previous Life

Circumstances and Manner of Maung Tin Win's Speaking about the Previous Life. I have already quoted Maung Tin Win's own account of how the first memories of the previous life came to him. Daw Unt remembered a later event that stimulated his memories. Some fighting broke out between two factions of villagers at a bridge where U Thet Tin had killed three persons. The sight of the fighting at this place aroused Maung Tin Win's memories of the previous life.

Daw Unt said that Maung Tin Win would say he was U Thet Tin when he was playing.[41] (I refer below to his playing at being a robber.)

In March 1979 Maung Tin Win told U Nu: "I feel agitated talking about it [the previous life] now."

Daw Unt said that Maung Tin Win stopped speaking spontaneously about the previous life when he was about 10 years old. However, later, when he became drunk—a topic I mention below—he would sometimes feel himself to be again U Thet Tin. He would shout that he was not afraid of anyone and that as U Thet Tin he had never given in to anyone.

Maung Tin Win's Interest in Guns and in Playing at Robbers. Maung Tin Win had no phobia of firearms when he was young. On the contrary, he had a strong interest in guns and actually wanted to have firearms given to him. Instead, his parents bought him a toy gun. Maung Tin Win had more interest in guns than his younger brother.

Maung Tin Win also used to play at being a robber. He told U Win Maung and me (in 1979) that he still had some tendency to rob other people. Daw Unt did not mention this trait to us, and I do not know whether Maung Tin Win's use of the word *still* implied that he had had such a tendency when younger or that he was saying he had carried the trait over from the previous life.

Maung Tin Win's interest in the role of robber involved animosity toward the police, and he threatened to throw "things"—presumably stones and other handy

[41]Although Daw Unt did not say so, I presume that Maung Tin Win, like many other subjects of these cases, was reliving episodes of the previous life in his play. The subjects of these cases often enact in their play the vocation or principal occupation of the previous personality. Lalitha Abeyawardena and Chanai Choomalaiwong, both of whom remembered the life of a schoolteacher, played at being a teacher with their playmates; Erkan Kılıç, who remembered the life of a nightclub owner, played at running a nightclub. Other children may reenact a habit of the previous personality. Sujith Lakmal Jayaratne gave a perfect imitation of a drunk falling down. I have given other examples of this feature elsewhere (Stevenson, 1987, pp. 182-183, 304).

missiles—at them. He had to be restrained from doing this. His antagonism toward the police and threats of attacking them went on until he was about 10 years old.

In 1979 Maung Tin Win said that he was not afraid of the police or governmental authorities. He said that he no longer felt angry at the police, but he still disliked them.[42]

Maung Tin Win's Interest in Drinking Alcohol and Gambling. Maung Tin Win developed a fondness for drinking alcohol and gambling. He showed these behaviors when he was about 16 years old. He acknowledged to us that both habits were persisting at the time of our meeting in 1979, when he was about 25 years old.

We have to appraise Maung Tin Win's involvement with alcohol in relation to his own father's heavy drinking. Daw Unt told Daw Hnin Aye in 1984 that her (third) husband, U Khin Maung, had been a heavy drinker until about 1983.

Maung Tin Win's Jealousy of U Khin Maung. From the time he was between 4 and 5 years old until he was about 10, Maung Tin Win showed marked hostility toward his father, U Khin Maung. He addressed his father rudely with words equivalent to "Hey, you churl." Reprimanded for this by adults, he said that he would not address a subordinate—as U Khin Maung had been to U Thet Tin—as "father."

Maung Tin Win sometimes expressed his displeasure at U Khin Maung in open violence, by throwing things at him. Once he even threw a knife at his father. U Khin Maung found his son's antagonism almost unbearable and at one time considered sending Maung Tin Win to a reformatory. When Maung Tin Win was about 10 he made peace with his father, and his expressions of antagonism ceased.

U Khin Maung had been a member of U Thet Tin's band of insurgents, and he had been loyal to U Thet Tin. There were therefore no grounds for U Thet Tin (or Maung Tin Win, regarded as U Thet Tin's reincarnation) to be hostile toward U Khin Maung on the basis of any disagreements they had had during U Thet Tin's lifetime. U Khin Maung's main offense in the eyes of Maung Tin Win appeared to be his having married Daw Unt.[43] In addition, Maung Tin Win claimed all of U Thet Tin's possessions as his own, and he may have regarded his father as improperly taking what was U Thet Tin's.

For her part, Daw Unt acknowledged that because she believed that Maung Tin Win was her second husband reborn, she had favored him.

Comment. My notes do not give details about Daw Unt's acknowledged favoring of Maung Tin Win. If she conspicuously favored him more than her other

[42]Many other subjects who remembered previous lives that ended violently have expressed antagonism (when they were young children) toward the persons who killed them or toward persons of the same group, such as policemen. Cemil Fahrici's attitude toward the police when he was a young child (described in Chapter 10) closely resembled that of Maung Tin Win. I give additional examples in the report of Maung Aye Kyaw's case in Chapter 4.

[43]Other subjects who have claimed to be the previous spouse of one or the other parent include: Ma Tin Tin Myint, Asha Rani, and Taru Järvi. These subjects all showed jealousy toward the parent who had married the previous spouse.

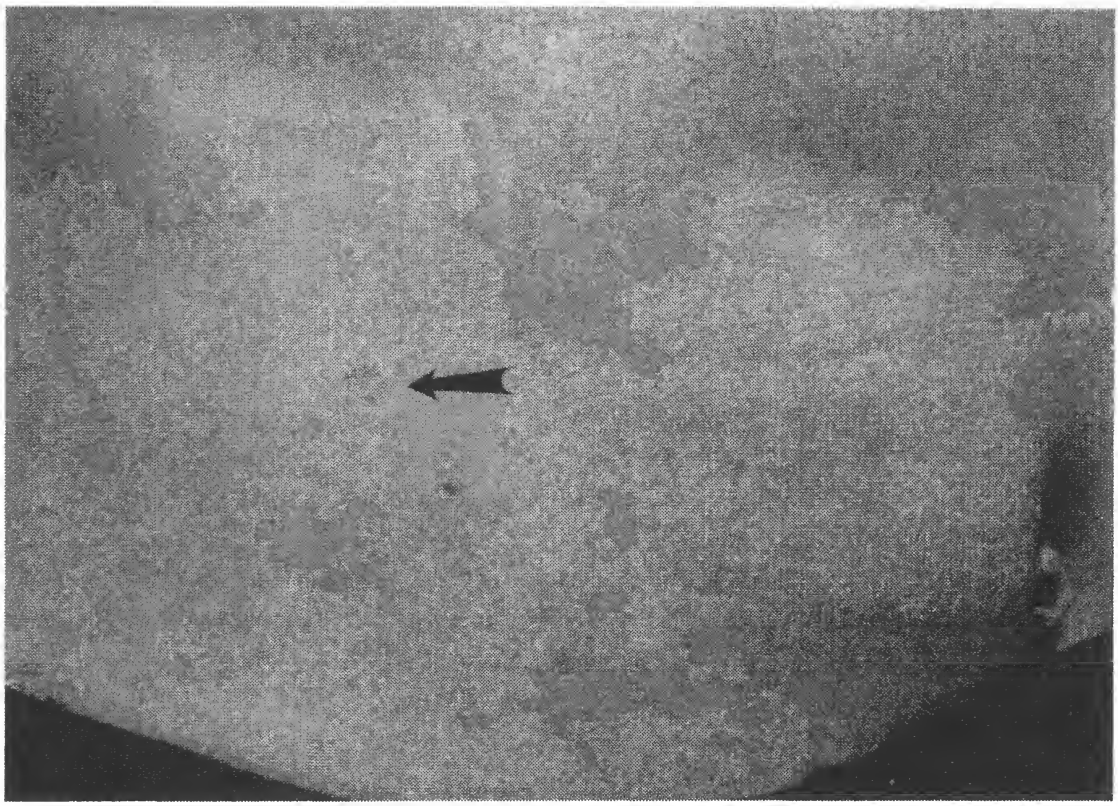

Figure 5-14 Birthmark on Maung Tin Win's abdomen in 1979 when he was 25 years old. The birthmark was approximately round, slightly depressed, and slightly puckered. It was about 2 centimeters superior to the umbilicus (which can be seen on the right in the photograph) and about midway between the midline of the abdomen and its right lateral margin. This birthmark was approximately 5 millimeters in diameter. It presumably corresponded to the bullet wound of entry on U Thet Tin.

children and also more than her husband, U Khin Maung, she might thereby have annoyed her husband and increased ill-feeling between him and Maung Tin Win.

Maung Tin Win's Birthmarks

Daw Unt said that she noticed Maung Tin Win's three birthmarks at the time of his birth. They were not bleeding or oozing. Daw Unt also said that the birthmark on Maung Tin Win's abdomen had become somewhat less prominent and also smaller—relative to surrounding tissues—between the time of his birth and my interview with Daw Unt in 1979. She said that it had not changed in position. The birthmark on his lower back had also become less prominent than it was when he was born, but it had not changed in size.

Figure 5-14 shows the birthmark on the right side of Maung Tin Win's abdomen as it appeared in 1979. It was located slightly above the level of the umbilicus and about halfway between the umbilicus and the midline laterally. It was almost exactly round in shape, about 5 millimeters in diameter, and slightly

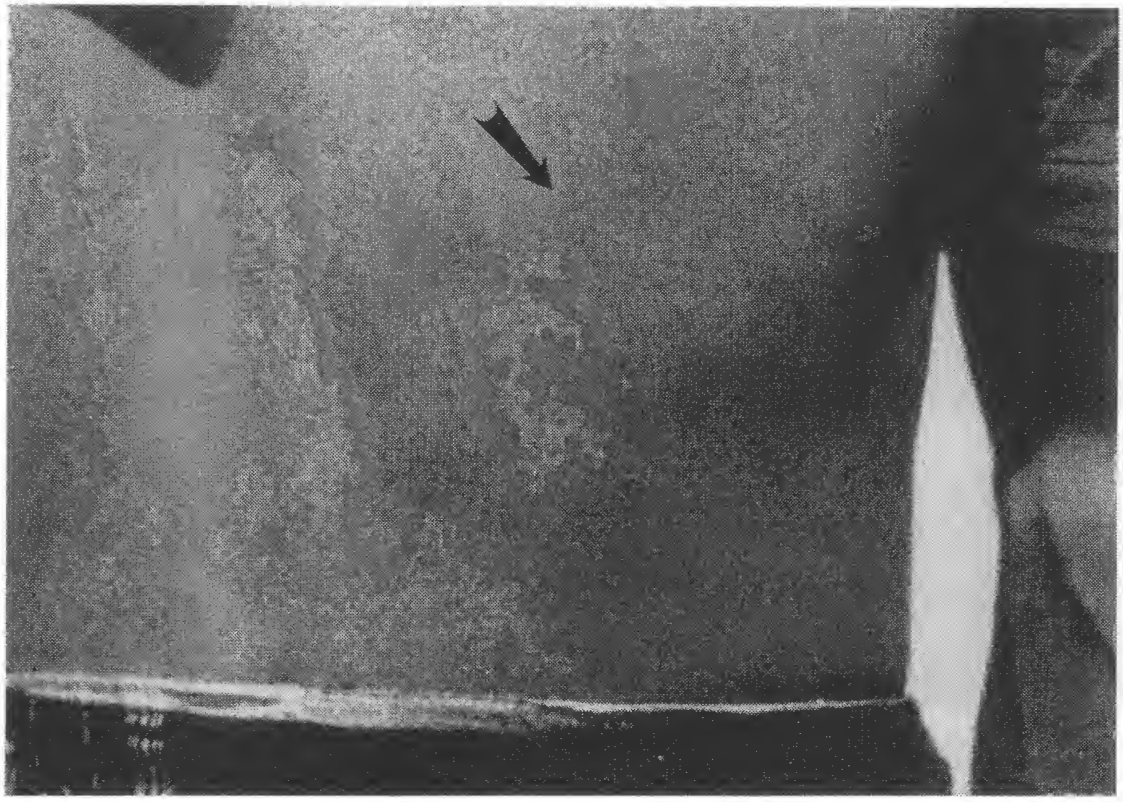

Figure 5-15 Birthmark on the right back of Maung Tin Win, also photographed in 1979. The birthmark was an area of increased pigmentation having an irregular shape, vaguely ovoid. It was about 12 centimeters in breadth and 8 centimeters in length. This birthmark presumably corresponded to the bullet wound of exit on U Thet Tin. (A small round puckered area lateral to the birthmark is probably the scar of a furuncle.)

depressed below the surrounding skin. It was slightly puckered, and its center was slightly darker than that of the surrounding skin.

Figure 5-15 shows the birthmark on Maung Tin Win's right lower back. It was neither elevated nor depressed. It was a large hyperpigmented macule.

Figure 5-16 shows the birthmark on Maung Tin Win's right knee. It was round and somewhat darker than the surrounding skin.

Maung Tin Win had never complained of pain at the sites of the birthmarks.

Daw Unt said that no other member of the family had any birthmarks.

Comment. The birthmark on Maung Tin Win's abdomen had a close resemblance to a scar from a healed wound of entry caused by a bullet. The larger birthmark on his back corresponded to the wound of exit.[44]

As I have already mentioned, exit wounds made by bullets are nearly always larger than entry wounds (Fatteh, 1976). However, the large size of the birthmark

[44]Other subjects having two birthmarks corresponding to bullet wounds of entry and exit include Alan Gamble, Maung Sein Win, Chanai Choomalaiwong, Henry Elkin, and Cemil Fahrici. In Chapter 12 I give a tabulation of 18 cases of this group.

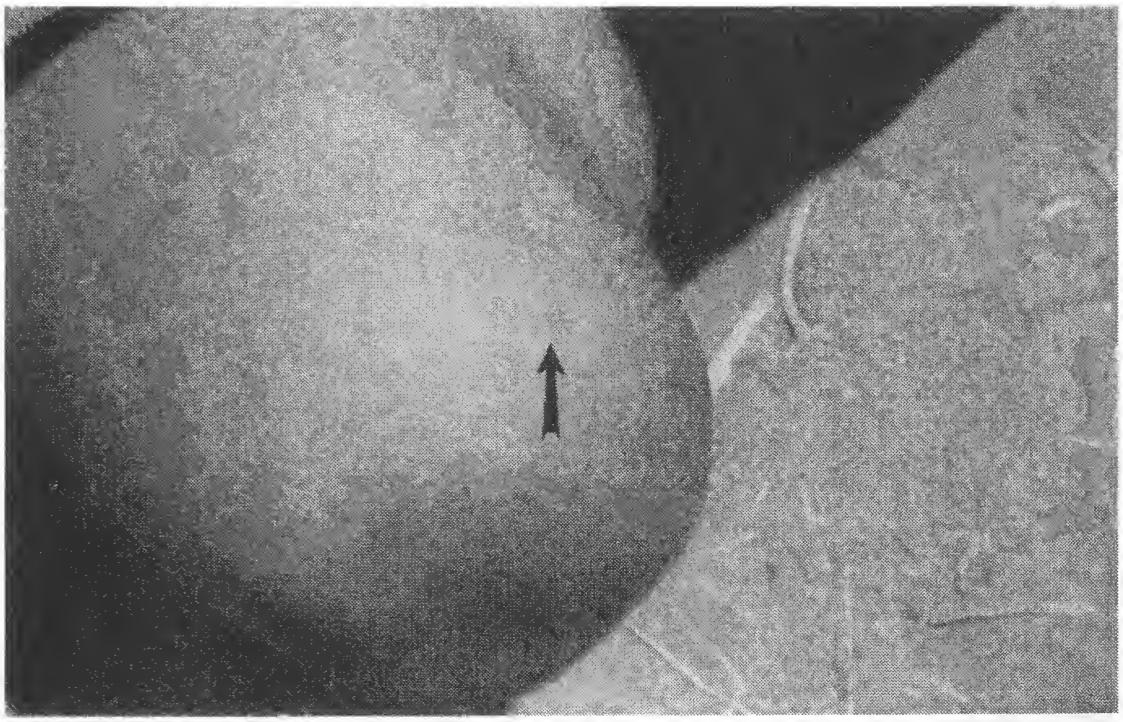

Figure 5-16 Birthmark on the right knee of Maung Tin Win, also photographed in 1979. The birthmark was the area of increased pigmentation indicated by the arrow. It was approximately round and 5 to 6 millimeters in diameter.

on Maung Tin Win's back suggests that the exit wound on U Thet Tin was unusually large. The pathway of the bullet might have included some bony tissue and its fragmentation by the bullet (as well as the fragmentation of the bullet by the bones) may have contributed to the large size of the exit wound. A bullet traveling at a high velocity could also have caused a large exit wound, and so could one of the "dum-dum" type, which is designed to enlarge upon impact with a body. We have no information on these possible factors, and I only mention them in order to show that U Thet Tin might have had an exit wound as large as the birthmark on Maung Tin Win's back.

The birthmark on Maung Tin Win's abdomen was not in the hypogastrium, if we define that as the area of the abdomen below the umbilicus. It was slightly superior (as well as lateral) to the umbilicus. I believe however, that its location corresponds with adequate closeness to the reported site of U Thet Tin's wound.

Maung Tin Win's Later Development

In 1979 Maung Tin Win was living with his parents and also with his wife and the one child they then had. He was working on the family farm and garden, where they were mainly raising grapes and betel leaves.

Maung Tin Win commented to U Nu that he felt indifferent toward his father, even though he knew that he was his parents' favorite child. His lack of

affection for his father may have been a residue of his earlier jealousy that I mentioned above.

In 1984 Daw Unt told Daw Hnin Aye that Maung Tin Win had become "mellow." It is difficult to know what she can have meant by this word, because she also said that Maung Tin Win was still very short-tempered, drank heavily, and beat his wife (but not his children, of whom he then had three).

THE CASE OF YAHYA BALCI

Introduction

The principal informants for this Turkish case spoke only Arabic, a circumstance that hampered the flow of information. In addition, during my interview with the subject's parents, other persons present interrupted more than they usually do and made difficult the conduct of satisfactorily systematic interviews with them. I never obtained an adequate account from the subject's parents about what statements he had made as a young child concerning the previous life. Despite this omission, the case deserves inclusion in this record because of the subject's distinct birthmark that corresponded with a bullet wound of entry in the person whose life he remembered. The testimony of informants concerning this birthmark and the bullet wound was satisfactory, although that concerning a wound of exit and another birthmark corresponding to it was not.

Summary of the Case and Its Investigation

Yahya Balcı was born in Samandağ in the province of Hatay, Turkey, on October 15, 1938. His parents were Izzet Balcı and his wife Emine. I did not learn Izzet Balcı's occupation or how many children he and his wife had.

Just before Yahya Balcı's birth his father dreamed that a man whom he knew came to him and said he intended to stay with him. The man who appeared in the dream was Süleyman Ridvan, who lived in the village of Büyükdere; he had been killed just a day before Yahya's birth. (I shall describe this dream later.)

When Yahya was born, his mother almost immediately noticed that he had a birthmark on his abdomen (Figure 5-17), and she showed it to her husband the next day. (She and her husband disagreed about the location of a second birthmark they said he had.)

Izzet Balcı had gone to Süleyman Ridvan's funeral, where he had seen the body of the murdered man. He noted a correspondence between the wounds on the deceased man and his son's birthmarks. This, together with the dream he had had, convinced him that Süleyman Ridvan had been reborn as his son. He and his wife did not wish Yahya to talk about a previous life. Accordingly they adopted a measure they had been told would suppress memories of a previous life: spitting in the mouth of the baby.

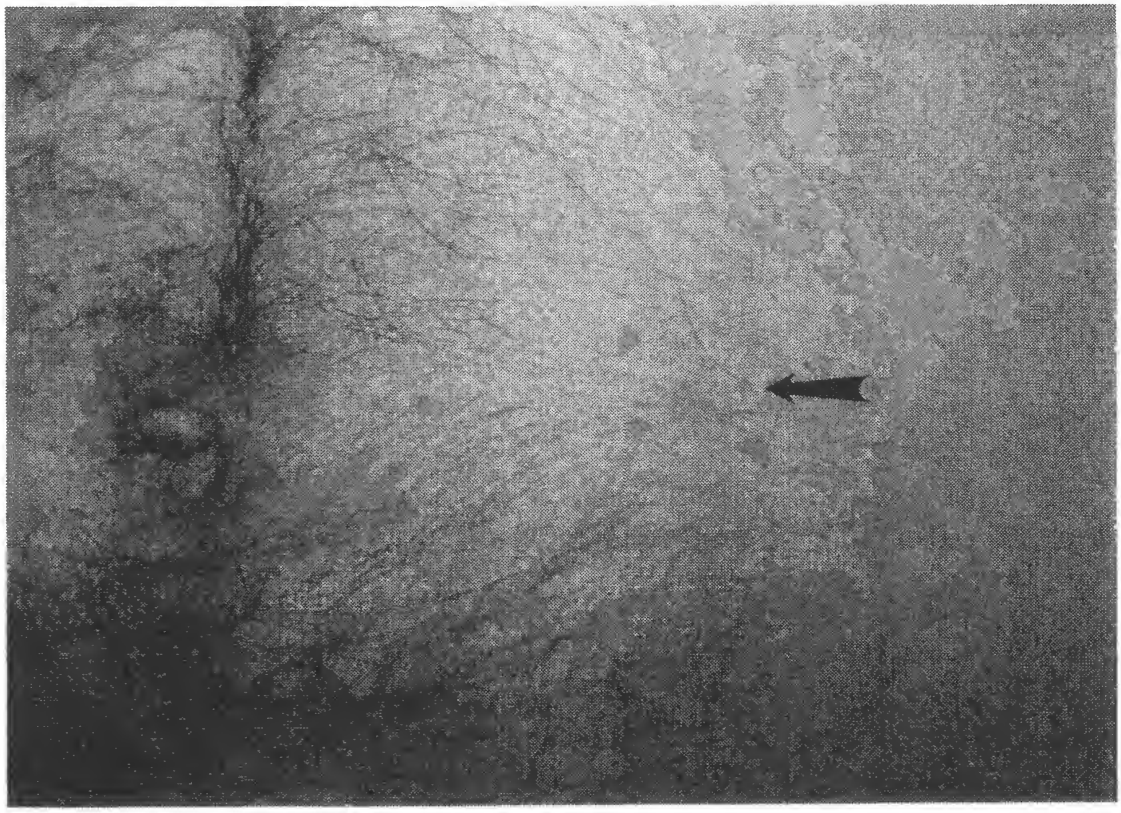

Figure 5-17 Birthmark on the abdomen of Yahya Balcı as it appeared in March 1973, when he was about 34½ years old. The birthmark was a round, puckered, scarlike area, approximately 5-6 millimeters in diameter. A surrounding erythema (indistinct in this black and white reproduction) was not normally present but occurred when the subject, thinking to make the birthmark more visible in the photograph, jerked out some of the hairs around the birthmark just before the photograph was made.

Yahya Balcı said that he began to speak when he was only 6 months old. Somewhat to my surprise both of his parents agreed that he had done so. (Probably they were considering Yahya's first syllabic utterances, not coherent phrases.) Later, when Yahya became able to walk, he began leaving the house, saying he was going to the house of his previous life. It was understood that he was referring to Büyükdere, where Süleyman Ridvan had lived and died, but I did not learn that Yahya ever, when he was a young child, specifically mentioned the name of this place, or, for that matter, the name of the deceased person of whom he was the supposed reincarnation.

Yahya's parents opposed his going to Büyükdere when he was a young child, and he did not go there until he was in his early 20s. At that time he was performing the usual 2 years of compulsory military service in Turkey. He came home on a leave and found that his father had become acquainted (or perhaps had renewed a former acquaintance) with the brothers of Süleyman Ridvan. Izzet Balcı had told them what his son had been saying about the life of their father, and he introduced his son to them. They wanted to take Yahya to Büyükdere, and, although Izzet still opposed his son's going—for reasons that I do not under-

stand—he nevertheless went there with Süleyman's brothers. In Büyükdere he made a number of recognitions, and I shall give more details of these later.

This case received no publicity whatever, and it would have remained completely unknown to anyone outside the two communities if Reşat Bayer and I had not happened to visit Samandağ in 1971 in connection with the study of other cases. At that time, a businessman of Samandağ, Mahmut Kadayıfçı, who learned of our investigations, told us about Yahya's case, and we had a long interview with him on March 31, 1971. We also, on that visit, interviewed each of his parents, not satisfactorily, as I have earlier explained. Almost two years later, in March 1973, we returned to the area and interviewed several members of Süleyman Ridvan's family in Büyükdere. We also met Yahya Balcı again in Samandağ and took better photographs of the birthmark on his abdomen than we had earlier obtained.

Persons Interviewed during the Investigation

In Samandağ I interviewed:

Yahya Balcı
Izzet Balcı, Yahya's father
Emine Balcı, Yahya's mother

In Büyükdere I interviewed:

Fatma Ridvan, Süleyman Ridvan's wife
Şehle Ridvan, Süleyman Ridvan's daughter
Garip Ridvan, Süleyman Ridvan's younger brother
Mikael Taşar, villager who had shot and killed Süleyman Ridvan

Şehle Ridvan had been a young girl of 3 years when her father had been killed, and she was able to contribute no firsthand information about her father. However, she did say that Yahya had recognized several members of the family and also the place in Büyükdere where her father had been shot. I shall refer to her again when I describe later the recognitions attributed to Yahya.

Relevant Facts of Geography and Possibilities for Normal Means of Communication between the Two Families

Samandağ is a large coastal town of perhaps 50,000 inhabitants at the southern end of the province of Hatay. Büyükdere is an area having several villages. It also is on the coast. It is about 10 kilometers north of Samandağ and about 15-17 kilometers south of İskenderun.

The two families concerned in this case knew each other but were not intimate. They lived in different communities. It happened, however, that Izzet Balcı and Süleyman Ridvan (who were both wrestlers) met in a wrestling match just before Süleyman's death in 1938. Izzet Balcı was in Büyükdere when Süleyman challenged him to a wrestling bout. Izzet said that he was at first reluctant to wrestle with

Süleyman, but did so. The wrestling match ended with no clear winner, but it left a residue of resentment on both sides. (Yahya, as I shall explain below, said that his father had been the victor and was afterward afraid that Süleyman would seek some kind of revenge.) After the wrestling match, Izzet returned to Samandağ, where, about a week later, he learned that Süleyman Ridvan had been shot and killed.

The Life and Death of Süleyman Ridvan

Yahya Balcı spoke about Süleyman Ridvan at some length, but I learned little about him from firsthand informants, such as his widow and brother.

He must have been a young man when he died. He was married and had a daughter, Şehle, who was about 3. Yahya Balcı described Süleyman's occupation as "bandit." Süleyman's wife did not confirm this explicitly, but she did say that her husband had spent 17 months in prison, which implies that he was convicted of some felony.

He was a wrestler and apparently one of great strength.

His death occurred during a quarrel with other villagers. Insults were exchanged, and one of his adversaries, Mikael Taşar, fired at Süleyman with a rifle. (Garip Ridvan said it was a Mauser rifle.) He died on the spot, probably from hemorrhage from a large artery the bullet had severed.

I obtained four different accounts of the location of the wounds on Süleyman when he was shot. Mikael Taşar was probably at some considerable distance from Süleyman when he fired at him and hit him. He did not go to the wounded man or see his body afterward. His statement about the location of Süleyman's wounds was therefore secondhand testimony. It did, however, correspond with the firsthand reports of Garip Ridvan and Izzet Balcı. Süleyman's widow, Fatma, saw her husband's body when it was brought to their home, but, although she gave me an account of the location of the wounds, she never answered my question about whether she had herself seen the wounds. That leaves Garip Ridvan and Izzet Balcı as firsthand witnesses for this detail. Garip Ridvan was younger than Süleyman and only about 9 years old at the time of his brother's death. He said that the bullet went in the front of Süleyman's abdomen and exited at his back. (He did not specify one side or the other of the midline.) Izzet Balcı had gone to see Süleyman's body and observed that the bullet had entered on the left side of the abdomen and exited on the right side of the back.

Süleyman died in the early autumn of 1938. His wife recalled that he died around August or September, but Izzet Balcı said that Yahya was born a day after Süleyman's death, which would put the death in the second week of October. I was unable to obtain a more precise date for Süleyman's death. Mikael Taşar was arrested and tried for the murder of Süleyman Ridvan. He was convicted and spent about 3 years in prison. The crime occurred during the period of the French occupation of Hatay, which ended in 1939, and all the pertinent legal documents were unobtainable for this investigation. They had possibly been destroyed or removed to France when the French returned the province to Turkey.

An Announcing Dream

After the wrestling match in Büyükdere, Izzet Balcı returned to his home in Samandağ. About a week later he dreamed that Süleyman Ridvan came and clung to him. Izzet tried to push him away, but Süleyman said: "I won't go away. I am staying here permanently." In the dream Süleyman was carrying a rifle. When Izzet awoke from this dream, he heard his wife crying that she had just given birth to a baby. At this time Izzet did not even know that Süleyman had been killed. When he heard this news soon afterward, he went to Büyükdere to see Süleyman's body. There the correspondence between Yahya's birthmarks and Süleyman's wounds (and the dream he had had in which Süleyman had come to him) impressed him so much that he told Süleyman's parents that their son had become his. According to Izzet, he had had his dream the night following Süleyman's death and just before Yahya's birth.

Statements and Recognitions Made by Yahya

I have already explained that I obtained no clear account from Yahya's parents about exactly what he had said concerning the previous life as a young child. However, he managed somehow to identify himself as Süleyman, the man of Büyükdere who had wrestled with his father and been killed a week later.

In 1971, when Yahya was 33 years old, he seemed stored with many memories of the previous life. I recorded three pages of handwritten notes before he stopped talking. I cannot, however, say how much of what he then narrated derived from what I call primary imaged memories, how much from what he had been told he had said earlier, and how much from what he had learned normally about the life of Süleyman. I shall therefore draw attention to only a few items of his statements that seem particularly pertinent.

Yahya gave the first name of Süleyman correctly, but he told us that Süleyman's last name was Çiçek. When Reşat Bayer and I went to Büyükdere 2 years later, we learned that there were indeed Çiçeks living there (and we met one), but they were not related to the Ridvans. The other details stated by Yahya correctly applied to Süleyman Ridvan, and it was to this family that he had gone about 10 years earlier, when he first visited Büyükdere. Perhaps we can consider Yahya's mistake about the surname as evidence that his memories had had no recent strengthening from visits with the previous family; otherwise, I should have expected him to have got their name right.

Yahya gave a much fuller account of the wrestling bout between Süleyman Ridvan and Izzet Balcı than Izzet gave us. I mentioned earlier that Izzet said ill-feeling arose from this wrestling bout. Yahya said that he remembered that Izzet had challenged Süleyman, not the other way round, as Izzet had said. He added that Izzet had been the victor and that afterward he had been afraid of vengeance on the part of Süleyman; and so he (Izzet) had gone home—somewhat hastily—to the security of his own community. Yahya gave a secondhand account of his

father's dream of Süleyman, according to which Izzet, in his dream, asked Süleyman whether he had come to take vengeance for being bested at wrestling. (Izzet mentioned no such detail in his account of the dream, and it may have been Yahya's embellishment.)

Yahya may also have romanticized the death of Süleyman by attributing the quarrel with other villagers to one of them having insulted a female member of his family. He had taken his rifle with the intention of shooting the man who had molested this woman, and he was approaching this man and a band accompanying him when the man himself (this was Mikael Taşar) opened fire first and killed Süleyman.[45]

Yahya said that when, as a young man, he had first gone to Büyükdere, he had recognized Süleyman's father and wife. I obtained no confirmation of the first of these recognitions, and Fatma Ridvan said that she had never met Yahya Balcı. However, Süleyman's brother Garip recalled that Yahya had recognized Fatma. (Perhaps Yahya recognized her from a distance without ever talking with her and without her ever learning about the recognition; many of the Alevi women of that period—and later—lived secluded lives.)

Garip Ridvan credited Yahya with several other recognitions. He said that Yahya inquired about the old house of the family; it had been taken down and a new one built in its place. Yahya recognized trees on the place, especially olive trees that Süleyman had grafted; and he recognized Şehle, Süleyman's daughter, when she passed by. He said: "That is my daughter." Şehle agreed that Yahya had recognized her, but she did not tell us details of how he had done this.[46] Şehle also

[45]Readers may notice similarities between critical events in the life of Süleyman Ridvan and that of another, more celebrated bandit, Cemil Hayik, whose life Cemil Fahrici recalled. The killing of another man because he insulted a member of the bandit's family figures in both cases. This does not mean that one account derived from the other. Such events were frequent, one might almost say commonplace, in Hatay during the 1930s. Indeed, even during the period of my investigations more than a generation later, a man could be shot and killed if he happened to make some uncongenial remark about a woman.

Yahya Balcı claimed that as Süleyman Ridvan he had heard about Cemil Hayik but was not associated with him.

[46]Şehle was only about 3 when her father died, and she would have been about 25 when Yahya was said to have recognized her. She must have changed so much in the interval that one could well ask whether Yahya's recognition included some paranormal process. I have studied a few other cases in which a subject was credited with the recognition of a person known to the previous personality many years after the person recognized and the previous personality had last seen each other.

Shanti Devi was said to have recognized the son of the person, Lugdi Devi, whose life she recalled. Lugdi Devi had died when this boy was a newborn infant, and he was about 8 years old at the time of the claimed recognition.

Normal inferences may be the best explanation in both these cases. Lugdi Devi's son came to visit Shanti Devi accompanied by his father, whom she had already recognized. And Şehle was still living in the Ridvans' home when Yahya recognized her; from her presence there and her apparent age, he might have inferred her identity.

said that Yahya had pointed out the place in the village where Süleyman had been killed. In addition, she credited Yahya with recognizing Süleyman's brothers. Garip Ridvan thought that Yahya had indeed recognized him, spontaneously. Garip was coming to where Yahya was, when Yahya saw him approaching and said: "Here comes my brother." All these recognitions, and other evidence, fully convinced Garip that Yahya was his brother Süleyman reborn.

Yahya's Behavior Related to the Previous Life

I have already mentioned Yahya's longing as a child to go to the previous family at Büyükdere. In addition to expressing this wish, on at least one occasion he actually left the house and set out for Büyükdere.

I did not learn of any other unusual behavior on the part of Yahya that might have been related to the previous life. Perhaps I should add that he had not taken up the vocation of a bandit, but was making an honest living driving a tractor on farms.

Yahya's Birthmarks

Figure 5-17 shows Yahya's most prominent birthmark. It was located almost at the level of the umbilicus and about 6 centimeters to its left. Its area was hairless and slightly puckered. An erythematous area surrounding it was not part of the natural condition of the birthmark, but was due to Yahya's kindly (but uninvited) effort to improve the photograph for us by jerking out the hairs around it.

Yahya's parents agreed with each other about the presence of this birthmark at Yahya's birth. They each also thought that Yahya had another birthmark. Emine thought that he had another one on the other side of the abdomen, but Izzet said that the other one was on the right side of the back. I examined Yahya's back carefully (although in a poor light) and also carefully studied photographs I took of it. Yahya said that he had a birthmark on the right side of his lower back. There were several small abnormal areas there, and I half-persuaded myself that one of them was a birthmark that corresponded to the wound of exit described by Izzet Balcı and Garip Ridvan. However, I do not wish to insist on any birthmark for whose existence we do not have adequate support in the testimony of informants; I have therefore not included a photograph of these marks on Yahya's back.

Izzet Balcı said that Yahya's birthmarks had discharged for 40 days and then healed over.

Yahya said that he had never experienced abdominal pain or, he added, suffered from any illness whatever.

Comment. Readers should compare the symmetrical roundness of Yahya's birthmark with the similar appearance of the birthmarks corresponding to bullet wounds of entry on Chanai Choomalaiwong, Maung Tin Win, and Henry Elkin.

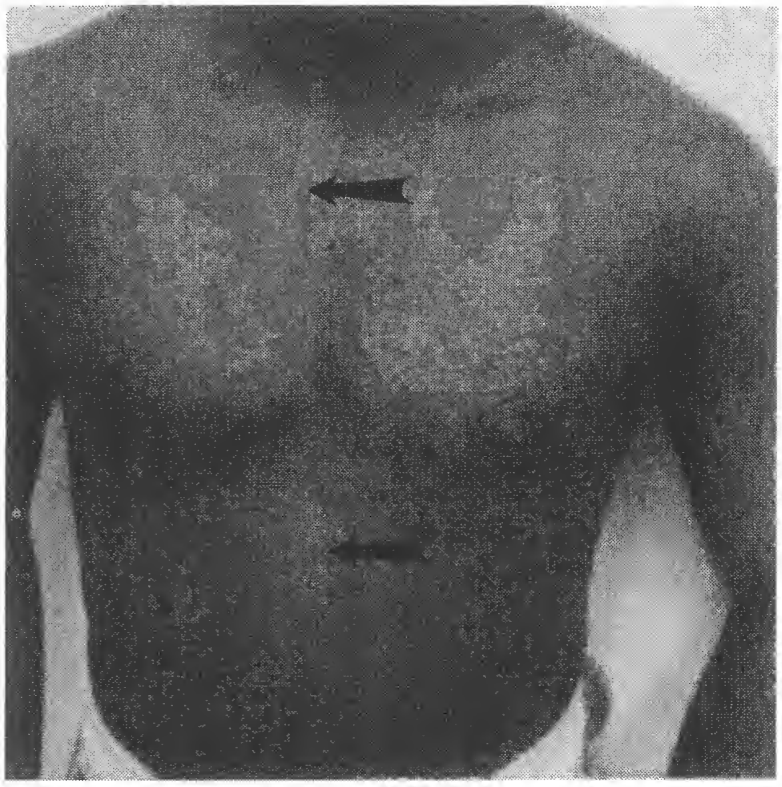

Figure 5-18 Birthmark on Aristide Kolotey as it appeared in October 1982, when he was 37 years old. The birthmark was a linear area of hypopigmentation about 3 millimeters wide and extending from beneath the right clavicle almost in the midline to about halfway between the xiphoid process and the umbilicus. The birthmark had somewhat the appearance of a healed scar, but was not hairless.

THE CASE OF ARISTIDE KOLOTEY

Summary of the Case and Its Investigation

Aristide Kolotey was born in Kordaki, Ghana, on September 12, 1945. His parents were Uba Kolotey and his wife, Mary. They belonged to the Ga ethnic group and were Christians. Aristide was the third of their children. (Some younger siblings were born later; I do not know how many.) Uba Kolotey was employed as a clerk in a government office.

Aristide was born with an extensive birthmark extending almost the entire length of the front of his chest and upper abdomen (Figure 5-18). He was identified as being the reincarnation of an uncle whose body was found with a cut in the chest after he had been swimming. The uncle was called Poepak. Aristide told me that he thought that he had not had any imaged memories of Poepak's life when he had been a young child.

When Aristide grew up, he trained as a biochemist, earned a doctoral degree, and became employed in a research laboratory in the area of Washington, D.C. Dr. Stuart Edelstein learned about this case in 1982 and wrote me a letter

containing preliminary information. I had two lengthy meetings with Aristide, in June 1983 and in April 1984. (We met in the Washington area.)

Aristide wrote to his father (still living in Ghana) to obtain some additional information about his case for me. Unfortunately, his father's reply (of which I have a copy) stated only the date of Poepak's death and gave no other information. It has not been feasible for me to travel to Ghana. Accordingly, the other details of the case as I learned them derive entirely from Aristide himself. I have no independent verification of his statements. I obviously believe that his memory is reliable as to the main facts of his case or I would not have included a report of it in this work.

The Death of Poepak

Although Uba Kolotey, in the letter to Aristide to which I referred above, described Poepak as "your uncle" (that is, Aristide's uncle), Aristide said that he thought his father was using the word *uncle* in the loose sense that is common in Asia and Africa. He thought that Poepak was a distantly related uncle, on his mother's side of the family, but he did not know the exact relationship.

Aristide did not learn about Poepak's death first from his father. Instead, his father's older brother, Emmanuel (a real uncle), told him about it, but he did not do this until Aristide was about 17 years old.

According to Emmanuel (as remembered by Aristide), Poepak's dead body was found washed up on the shore about a week after he had disappeared. The body had a "cut in the middle of the chest." Poepak's death was attributed to drowning. It was thought that he had dived into water without seeing, before he dived, a rock that was under the surface of the water. He must have cut himself badly on the rock; and the shock of the impact may also have stunned him so that he could not swim, and he thus drowned. Emmanuel had seen Poepak's body after it was washed ashore, so there was some verification, albeit secondhand, of a correspondence between a wound on Poepak's chest and the birthmark on Aristide's. (I did not learn exactly where this fatal accident took place, but think it was somewhere on the southern coast of Ghana.) Poepak died on August 24, 1941. (This is the single fact furnished in Uba Kolotey's letter.)

Aristide's Phobia of Water

Aristide told me that he had a marked phobia of water. He did not learn to swim until comparatively late in life. In June 1983, when he was nearly 38 years old, he said that he could swim, but still did not enjoy being in the water.

Aristide's Birthmark

Figure 5-18 shows the long birthmark on Aristide's chest. It began 1-2 centimeters to the right of the midline just beneath the right clavicle and then ran

inferiorly and medially. It extended into the upper abdomen, although in the photograph it is less distinctly visible below the end of the sternum.

The birthmark had the appearance of an acquired scar. It showed lessened pigmentation than the surrounding skin. It was not hairless. At its widest, it was about 3 millimeters wide.

Additional Background Information

Aristide had some knowledge of the traditional religion of the Ga people, which includes belief in reincarnation. However, he told me that his Christian upbringing had perhaps prevented him from learning as much about it as a "less Christianized person might have learned."

When he was a boy living in Kordaki, his father was away from the family working in Accra, and Aristide did not see him often. However, even when they did meet, his father never talked with him about religion. Thus it fell to Aristide's uncle Emmanuel to inform Aristide about his presumed identification as the reincarnation of his "uncle" Poepak.

Comment. Since Aristide's birthmark was about as obvious as any can be, I do not understand why he was not told at a younger age about the belief in his family that he was Poepak reincarnated.

THE CASE OF DAW AYE THAN

Summary of the Case and Its Investigation

Daw Aye Than was born in the village of Toenangone (about 100 kilometers southwest of Rangoon, Burma) on March 29, 1936. Her parents were U Maung Maung and Daw Hman Pa. U Maung Maung was a cultivator. Daw Aye Than was the eighth of their nine children.

Daw Aye Than was born with a prominent birthmark on the upper part of her right abdomen (Figure 5-19).

Daw Aye Than said that she was about 3 years old when she first began to talk about the previous life of a child that she remembered. She particularly recalled details of events just preceding death in that life.

U Win Maung learned of this case early in 1978, and in February of that year he interviewed Daw Shin, who was the older sister of Ma Tin, the girl whose life Daw Aye Than recalled. However, that year Daw Aye Than herself was unavailable in Rangoon. In February 1980, U Win Maung met Daw Aye Than, and 2 weeks later, when I was in Rangoon, we had another interview with her together. On March 2, 1980, we had another interview with Daw Shin. Daw Aye Than's parents had both died by the time we began to study the case, and we have not met any of Daw Aye Than's older siblings. I believe that those who were still living were in villages of the delta southwest of Rangoon, which was inaccessible to us.

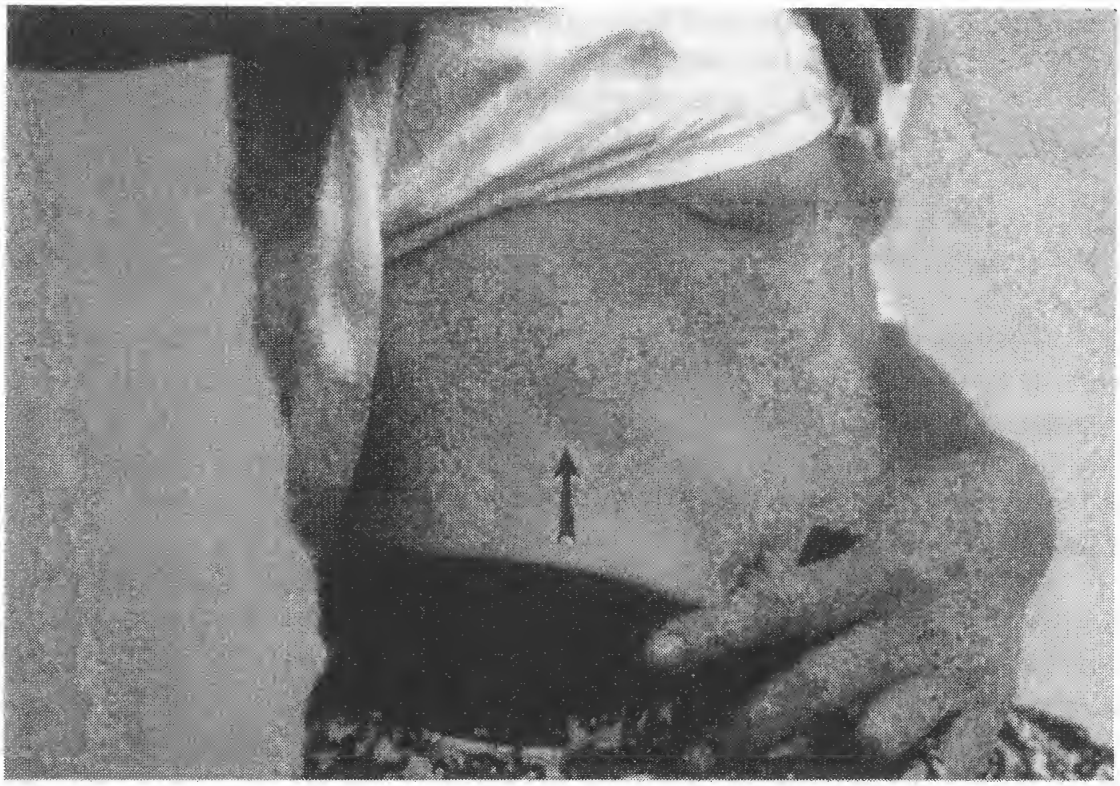

Figure 5-19 Birthmark on Daw Aye Than as it appeared in 1980, when she was about 44 years old. The mark was a linear area of scarring about 5 millimeters wide and 10 centimeters long extending across her lower right ribs and upper abdomen.

In February 1986, U Win Maung and I met (in Rangoon) one of Daw Aye Than's sisters-in-law, Daw Myint Myint Than. However, she was able to contribute almost no further information about the case.

Relevant Facts of Geography and Possibilities for Normal Means of Communication between the Two Families

Both the families concerned in this case lived in the same village, Toenangone, which is located in the delta area southwest of Rangoon. They were good friends, but not related. Both families were Karens, but members of different Karen groups. They were Buddhists. (Many Karens are Christians.)

The Death of Ma Tin

We obtained information about Ma Tin's short life from Daw Shin, her older sister. (Readers should remember that she herself was a girl of just about 5 years when Ma Tin died, and in 1978 and 1980 she was recalling events that had occurred almost 50 years earlier.)

Ma Tin was the second of three children born to her parents, U Kyaw Tin and Daw Ngwe Ya. She was born in about 1928. Her sister, Ma Shin (later Daw Shin, our informant) was 2 years older; and at the time of Ma Tin's death the family also had a young son who was just under a year old.

U Kyaw Tin was a casual laborer during much of the year, but he also cultivated a small paddy field, which was located at a place called Myaungmya, about 3 kilometers from Toenangone. During the harvest season (December and January), he would remain at the paddy field almost continuously, day and night. This vigilance was necessary to prevent the paddy from being stolen. Near the field he had a shelter constructed, and the older children of the family were left in or near this shelter while he worked in the field. The shelter had straw piled on the roof, partly to store the straw for cattle fodder and partly to protect anyone in the shelter from the sun's heat. There was also some straw on the ground and mosquito netting around the sides.

One day when Ma Tin was about 3 years old, she and her older sister, Ma Shin, were playing in this shelter while their father worked in the field some distance away. Somehow the children found a box of matches and lit a fire to warm themselves. The mosquito netting caught fire and then the straw. The entire shelter was quickly ablaze. Ma Shin escaped, but Ma Tin became entangled in the mosquito netting and was trapped inside the shelter. Ma Shin ran for their father, but he was some distance away, and when he did come there was no water handy for dousing the fire. He ran into the shelter to bring Ma Tin out, but she was already dead. He himself was so severely burned during his attempt to rescue her that he died 2 days later in a hospital.

Daw Shin recalled that when Ma Tin's body was pulled out of the fire, she saw that her sister's abdomen had swollen and burst and her intestines had come out of it.

Daw Shin recalled that the fire generated "quite a lot of smoke." It is probable that Ma Tin died of asphyxiation quickly, and before her body was burned.

The accident occurred at about 11:00 a.m. and probably in December 1931.

Comment. The detail of the abdomen bursting and intestines coming out is entirely plausible. The intense heat of a fire can expand gases in the intestines so that abdominal pressure exceeds the strength of the muscles and the wall bursts, allowing the intestines to extrude. Simpson (1978a, p. 155) published the photograph of the charred corpse of a person who had died in a fire; the victim's abdomen had burst, and the photograph shows the extruded small intestines.

Statements and Recognitions Made by Daw Aye Than

Daw Shin thought (mistakenly, I think) that Daw Aye Than did not begin to speak about the previous life until she was 12 or 13 years old. (Daw Aye Than remembered beginning to speak about it when she was about 3 years old.) Daw Shin contributed no information about what Daw Aye Than said when she was a young child. Unfortunately, I could not interview any other witness, such as one

of Daw Aye Than's older siblings, who might have corroborated the memories that Daw Aye Than said she had had in early childhood.

I shall first summarize what Daw Aye Than said she remembered and then add the information that Daw Shin gave concerning what Daw Aye Than could recognize when she was older.

Daw Aye Than's Memories in 1980. Daw Aye Than recalled that on the morning of the fire she had eaten a roasted banana. She remembered that later she and her older sister (Daw Shin) were in the shelter by the paddy field under the mosquito netting. Their father was winnowing a harvest nearby. She remembered that she had wanted to go home, but did not say this to her sister or father at the time. She recalled that she and her sister had played at cooking and that she then felt tired and went to sleep. She had no recollection of the fire and of being burned.

Daw Aye Than said that she had remembered Ma Tin's house, father, and older sister, but had not remembered her mother or infant brother. She explained the different memories for members of Ma Tin's family by saying that she remembered only the persons who were with Ma Tin when she died. This suggests that Ma Tin's mother and brother had not been at the paddy field at the time of the accident, but I have not verified this detail.

I cannot say whether Daw Aye Than had more extensive memories of Ma Tin's life when she was younger. She does appear, however, to have preserved at least some memories of the previous life into her middle 40s, thus somehow avoiding the usual loss of the memories that occurs with most subjects between the ages of 5 and 10 and sometimes younger. In response to a direct question, she denied that her memories had undergone any fading since her childhood.

Daw Aye Than also had some memories of being in a discarnate realm with Ma Tin's father (who, it will be recalled, died of burns about 2 days after Ma Tin). She remembered that he seemed wet. (There was no explanation for this detail.) She also recalled that U Kyaw Tin (in the discarnate realm) was carrying Ma Tin on his shoulder. Then they somehow became separated, and U Kyaw Tin disappeared.

Comment. These last memories of the "intermission" period are totally unverified; they are in fact unverifiable. Just possibly they are memories of Ma Tin's life *before* her death, since it is quite likely that U Kyaw Tin had carried his young daughter around on his shoulder from time to time.

Daw Aye Than's memories of the scene of Ma Tin's death accorded in general with Daw Shin's account of the death, which I described earlier. Daw Shin, however, did not recall that she and her younger sister had been playing at cooking before the mosquito netting caught fire. She remembered that they had set a fire to warm themselves. She said that she and her sister did sometimes play at cooking, but she could not remember whether or not they had done this on the day of the fire.

Daw Shin's Memories of Daw Aye Than's Recognitions When Daw Aye Than was 12 or 13 Years Old. Daw Shin recalled that Daw Aye Than had recognized Daw Shin in a photograph, but she had not witnessed this herself. She did

not meet Daw Aye Than until the latter was about 12 or 13 years old, and she did not think that Daw Aye Than had then recognized her. Nor did she recognize Ma Tin's younger brother, who had been an infant when Ma Tin died, or Ma Tin's mother, Daw Ngwe Ya. Daw Aye Than had not realized (at this time) that U Kyaw Tin was dead, and she asked for him.

Daw Shin recalled that at the period when she first met Daw Aye Than, the latter did not recall the manner of Ma Tin's death.

Comment. This last statement is not incompatible with what Daw Aye Than told U Win Maung and me. She knew, from normal knowledge learned in her family, that Ma Tin had died in a fire, but her last recollection of the life of Ma Tin was of falling asleep after Ma Tin and her sister had been playing at cooking in the shelter.

Daw Aye Than's Behavior Related to the Previous Life

Circumstances and Manner of Daw Aye Than's Speaking about the Previous Life. Daw Aye Than remembered that she had had an urge to talk about the life of Ma Tin when she had been young, and that whenever she talked about it "too much," she became ill with a fever. She also recalled that she tended to talk about the previous life in the evenings more than at other times.

Daw Shin remembered that Daw Aye Than as a child had referred to Ma Tin's parents in more affectionate terms than she had used for her own parents. The former she referred to by the Burmese equivalents of "Mummy" and "Daddy," the latter by the equivalents of "Mamma" and "Pappa." She also recalled Daw Aye Than's threatening to run away and "go to my mother" when she became angry with her parents.

Daw Aye Than's Birthmark

Figure 5-19 shows what was still visible of Daw Aye Than's original birthmark in 1980. This mark, on her right upper abdomen, extending somewhat over the lower right ribs, was a linear area of scarring about 5 millimeters wide and 10 centimeters long. It was at the site indicated to us by Daw Shin as that where Ma Tin's intestines had burst through her abdomen at the time of the fire. (Daw Shin's indication of this area may have been influenced by her normal knowledge of Daw Aye Than's birthmark.)

Daw Aye Than drew attention to another mark below her left breast and said that when she had been younger this mark had joined the one that is presently visible. She did have under her left breast a linear mark that might have been a birthmark, but as I think it may have been a normal crease in the skin, I have decided not to reproduce the photograph that I took of this mark. However, traces of a linear, scarlike area (crossing the midline) could be seen between the main birthmark on the right lower chest and the line under the left breast. These are visible in Figure 5-20.

Figure 5-20 This figure shows Daw Aye Than's asymmetrical breasts as they appeared in 1980 when she was about 44 years old. Between the breasts, in the midline, a faint, linear area of scarring can be seen. This seems to be a residue of an extension of the birthmark on Daw Aye Than's right chest that was more visible when she was younger.

Daw Shin had first seen Daw Aye Than's birthmark when Daw Aye Than was about 12 or 13 years old. She said that the birthmark was then more prominent than it later became. She thought that it had become "stretched, flattened, and faded."

Daw Aye Than had asymmetrical breasts (Figure 5-20), her right one being appreciably lower than her left one, as well as definitely smaller. This difference was pointed out to Daw Shin at the time she first met Daw Aye Than, when (presumably) Daw Aye Than was just at puberty.

Daw Aye Than said that none of her living siblings—they were all sisters—had had a birthmark like hers, and none had asymmetrical breasts like hers.

Daw Myint Myint Than answered a question we had failed to ask Daw Aye Than (who, in 1986, had returned to her village). She said that Daw Aye Than had had six children and was able to breast-feed them.

Comment. This is one of the few cases for which I obtained no statement from someone other than the subject assuring me that the claimed birthmark had been present at birth or noticed very soon after birth. However, the case has features of other cases of this type in Burma. If the prominent birthmark on Daw Aye Than's chest had been the result of some postnatal accidental injury, she would

surely have known about this, either from her own memories or from being told about it by her elders. I could see no motive for her to have falsely attributed a postnatal injury to a previous life.

Daw Aye Than thought that the abnormality of her right breast—in being lower than her left one—derived from the previous life. I do not, however, understand how the connection could have arisen. It is possible that some shrinkage of tissues occurring around the birthmark lower down on the right side of her trunk might have pulled the breast down as Daw Aye Than grew older; but I do not offer this suggestion as more than a conjecture.

I will also offer here another conjecture and introduce for the first time in this work the concept of a field derived from a wound of the previous life. Such a field might affect not just the tissues of the subject exactly corresponding to a wound but a larger area contiguous to the site of the wound. Cases that I shall present later in this work seem almost to require the concept of a field, but the present one does not.

6

Birthmarks Corresponding to Wounds Verified by Medical Records

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter I present 12 cases for which I was able to obtain medical records that verified the nature and location of the wounds on the deceased person whose life the subject remembered. These medical records were all made soon after the concerned person died and well before the case to which they apply developed. They thus provide a record of the wounds that is free of an objection that informants' memories of the wounds have been adjusted to harmonize with the location of the birthmarks.

In later chapters of this work I shall present additional cases with medical records. I shall also discuss the usual concordance between the informants' memories and the medical records and consider a few exceptions in which memories and written records were discrepant.

I have grouped the 12 cases of this chapter according to the types of wounds that led to the deaths of the previous personalities in the cases. In the first three cases there were bullet wounds of the head and hand. In the next five cases the wounds were inflicted with bladed weapons. These are followed by a single case of a fatal shotgun wound and then by three cases in which death resulted from fatal head injuries from falls.

CASE REPORTS

THE CASE OF METİN KÖYBAŞI

Summary of the Case and Its Investigation

Metin Köybaşı was born in the village of Hatun Köy, near İskenderun, Turkey, on June 11, 1963. His parents were Mahmut Köybaşı and his wife, Celile. Mahmut Köybaşı was a laborer at the docks in İskenderun. He and his wife had 11 children in all; Metin was their ninth child.

Both Mahmut and Celile Köybaşı had dreams before Metin's birth that indicated to them that one of Mahmut's relatives called Haşim Köybaşı would be reborn in their family. Haşim, a young man of about 20, had been killed about 5 months before Metin's birth. (He had been shot through the neck.) He was related to both of Metin's parents. When Metin was born, his parents noted that he had a birthmark on the right side of his neck (Figure 6-1).

Metin started to talk when he was about a year old. Between the ages of 2 and 3 he began to refer to the life of Haşim Köybaşı. However, up to the age of 4½, when I first met him (in November 1967), he had not yet spoken about the details of Haşim Köybaşı's murder.

I first learned of the case in 1967 and began to investigate it almost immediately (with Reşat Bayer). At that time I had a short interview with Celile Köybaşı and examined the still quite visible birthmark on the right side of Metin's neck below his chin. I did not investigate the case further until March 1970, at which time I had interviews with Metin, both of his parents, and his older brother Fikret. In that year also, I was able to study records of the trial of Süleyman and Kamil Köklü, who had been convicted of killing Haşim Köybaşı. In March 1971, I had some further interviews with Metin's parents and with his older sister Hulya.

I did not meet Metin and his family again until March 1977. At that time I had another interview with him and one also with his father.

Persons Interviewed during the Investigation

In İskenderun I interviewed:

Metin Köybaşı
Mahmut Köybaşı, Metin's father
Celile Köybaşı, Metin's mother
Fikret Köybaşı, one of Metin's older brothers
Hulya Köybaşi, one of Metin's older sisters

In Hatun Köy I interviewed:

Rahmiye Köybaşı, Haşim Köybaşı's mother
Emine Köybaşı, widow of Ali Köybaşı, Haşim Köybaşı's brother

Süleyman Köybaşı, neighbor and distant relative of the Köybaşı family (not Haşim Köybaşı's father)

Fikret and Hulya Köybaşı were about 10 and 8 years older than Metin. Circumstances enabled me to interview Fikret in the absence of his parents. This makes his corroborating testimony somewhat independent of theirs.

Readers may consider that I lapsed in not interviewing at least one male member of Haşim Köybaşı's immediate family, and I now wish that I had done so. However, I considered Mahmut Köybaşı an adequately informed verifier of events in a family to which he was closely related. He also seemed qualified to report on the details of the murder of Haşim Köybaşı, at the scene of which he arrived shortly after Haşim had been fatally wounded. The records of the trial of the Köklü brothers for the murder of Haşim Köybaşı provided further useful information.

Relevant Facts of Geography and Other Pertinent Background Information

Both families concerned in this case lived in Hatun Köy, a village in the area known as Karaağaç, which is a group of agricultural villages located about 6 to 8 kilometers south of the large seaport of İskenderun.

Metin's father, Mahmut Köybaşı, was a first cousin of Haşim Köybaşı's father, Süleyman. Thus Haşim and Metin were second cousins. Süleyman Köybaşı was also Celile's "uncle," but I did not learn the exact relationship between them. The two families lived in houses about 10 meters apart in Hatun Köy. The families were thus neighbors and fairly close relatives, and Metin did not make any statements about matters not already known to members of his family.

Although Mahmut Köybaşı maintained a house in Hatun Köy, he also had one in İskenderun, and we interviewed him and the other informants in Metin's immediate family in İskenderun.

The Death of Haşim Köybaşı

Haşim Köybaşı was a young unmarried peasant about 20 years old when members of his village, Hatun Köy, became embittered by an election for the office of *muhtar* (headman) of the village. The Köybaşı family comprised, with their followers, one contending party in the election, which they lost. After the votes were counted, the members of the victorious party began to celebrate their success, and, their tongues loosened with alcohol, they made remarks taunting their defeated opponents. The children and women of the two factions began quarreling. One of the Köybaşı women is said to have opened the door of her house and discharged a volley of abuse aimed at the gloating celebrants. This precipitated a general melée. Clubs were swung and guns fired. Haşim Köybaşı was shot. His brother, Ali, who was nearby, ran to his aid and was then himself fatally wounded. Haşim died at the village, but Ali was still living when taken to the hospital in İskenderun, where he

died.[1] Other rioters were less seriously injured. Celile Köybaşı suffered only a hair-pulling and a knife cut that rendered her *hors de combat* for 3 days. That most of the participants in the tumult were drunk contributed to the violence at the time and to the later confusion about just what had happened.

Two informants (neither actually on the scene at the time) said that Metin's mother, Celile Köybaşı, had been the woman mentioned above whose invective had ignited the riot. Celile herself, in talking with me, claimed, or affected, to have no direct knowledge of the occasion. It is possible that she had an alcoholic amnesia for it. Perhaps also she wished to avoid blowing on the cooling embers of village animosities.

I derived most of my information about the death of Haşim Köybaşı from Mahmut Köybaşı and from the records of the trial of Süleyman and Kamil Köklü for Haşim's murder. Mahmut Köybaşı was away from Hatun Köy when the fighting began, but he returned soon after it started. He was not a witness of the wounding of either Haşim or Ali, but he heard a shot, which he later took to be that of the bullet that wounded Ali. According to him, other shots dispersed the rioters, and he then carried Ali to a jeep which transported him, dying, to İskenderun.

Reşat Bayer and I obtained a copy of the report by the medical examiner who conducted a partial autopsy on the body of Haşim Köybaşı. I quote from this:

> I found a bullet wound of entry in the center of the left side of the neck. It was about 1 centimeter in diameter. I found no other wound on the body. However, on palpating the right side of the neck, inferiorly, I found a hard object like a bullet.[2] I made an incision in this area and withdrew a bullet, which I turned over to...the assistant procurator general, who was present.
>
> The bullet had passed through the cervical part of the vertebral column and completely destroyed the superior part of the spinal cord, thus causing death.

The document adds that because the mentioned wound seemed so obviously the cause of death, the medical examiner found no need to perform a complete autopsy of the body.

Haşim Köybaşı must have died within a few minutes, at most, of being wounded. Although the villagers took his brother Ali to the hospital in the hope of saving his life, they must have judged Haşim dead immediately after the brawl ceased.

[1]Mehmet Samioğlu, whose case I also report in this work (in the section on birth defects), claimed to remember the life of Ali Köybaşı. The reports of his case and that of Metin Köybaşı should be read in conjunction.

[2]Fatteh (1976) noted that "because of the toughness and elasticity of the skin, bullets are frequently stopped in the subcutaneous tissues" (p. 125).

Six of the combatants who survived the fray were arrested and tried. Süleyman Köklü and his older brother, Kamil Köklü, were convicted of the murder of Haşim Köybaşı, and each was sentenced to 15 years in prison.

Haşim Köybaşı died on January 14, 1963.

Three Announcing Dreams

Celile Köybaşı was pregnant when Haşim died. After his death she had two dreams in which he figured. In the first, she did not see him, but she somehow "learned" that he was going elsewhere to be reborn. Some months later, she dreamed that Haşim Köybaşı came to her and said: "Get my bed ready. I am coming to you."

Celile said that this second dream occurred the day before she gave birth to Metin. She also said that it occurred 4 months after Haşim Köybaşı's death. In this she may have been wrong by a few weeks. If we accept June 11, 1963, as Metin's correct birthdate,[3] then the interval between Haşim's death and Metin's birth was almost exactly 5 months.

Mahmut Köybaşı said that he also dreamed of Haşim on the night before Metin's birth. In this dream Haşim appeared to him and, after first asking how Mahmut was, told him: "I am coming back to you."

Statements and Recognitions Made by Metin

In Table 6-1, I have listed all the statements attributed to Metin by informants for the case. They are almost entirely restricted to two themes: Haşim Köybaşı's family and the circumstances of his death.

Fikret Köybaşı told me that Metin had recognized a horse that had belonged to Haşim Köybaşı. He also said that Metin had pointed out the place where Haşim had been killed, near an orange tree. I did not, however, obtain details about the circumstances of these recognitions and so have not listed them in Table 6-1.

I had three interviews with Metin not counting my brief examination of the birthmark on his neck in 1967. When I met him in March 1970, he was not quite 7 years old. At that time he preserved some memories of the previous life, but had lost others. He recalled the name of the identified previous personality in this case, Haşim, and the nickname of Haşim's murderer, "Atwin." But he could no longer remember the name of Haşim's brother (Ali) or the reason for the quarrel in which Haşim had been killed.

[3]The date is that on Metin's identity card. Mahmut Köybaşı said that he obtained the identity card "soon after" Metin's birth and that the date was accurate. It accords within a month with the date we obtain from Celile's statements that she had her second dream 4 months after Haşim's death and the day before she gave birth to Metin.

Table 6-1 **Summary of Statements Made by Metin**

Item	*Informants*	*Verification*	*Comments*
1. His name was Haşim Köybaşı.	Mahmut Köybaşı, Metin's father Fikret Köybaşı, one of Metin's older brothers	Mahmut Köybaşı Rahmiye Köybaşı, Haşim Köybaşı's mother	
2. His father was named Süleyman.	Mahmut Köybaşı Fikret Köybaşı	Mahmut Köybaşı	
3. His mother was named Rahmiye.	Mahmut Köybaşı Fikret Köybaşı	Mahmut Köybaşı	
4. He had an aunt named Meryem.	Mahmut Köybaşı	Mahmut Köybaşı	Meryem was Süleyman Köybaşı's sister.
5. His brother was named Ali.	Celile Köybaşı, Metin's mother	Mahmut Köybaşı Rahmiye Köybaşı	
6. His brother's wife was named Emine.	Fikret Köybaşı	Emine Köybaşı, widow of Ali Köybaşı	
7. His brother's daughters were Besime, Resmiye, and Veliye.	Fikret Köybaşı	Partly incorrect	Ali and Emine Köybaşı had one daughter, Besime. Another Besime and also Ritmiye (not Resmiye) and Veliye were sisters of Süleyman Köybaşı, and therefore Haşim's paternal aunts.

8. He worked on a farm.	Celile Köybaşı	Correct, but I did not identify the verifier in my notes.	
9. He used to carry wood.	Celile Köybaşı	Unverified	
10. There was a quarrel over elections.	Celile Köybaşı Fikret Köybaşı	Records of the trial of Süleyman and Kamil Köklü	
11. The quarrel started among the young people.	Celile Köybaşı	Records of the trial of Süleyman and Kamil Köklü	
12. He was shot by Süleyman "Atwin" Köklü.	Celile Köybaşı Mahmut Köybaşı Fikret Köybaşı	Records of the trial of Süleyman and Kamil Köklü	Celile Köybaşı said that Metin gave only the name Atwin. Mahmut Köybaşı made a similar statement, but spoke the name "Atwiz," or so I wrote it down. Atwin (as the name was given to me most often) is a nickname used for someone who is unusually short in stature. Of the three informants for this item, only Fikret Köybaşı said that Metin gave the full name Süleyman Köklü.
13. He was shot near an orange tree.	Mahmut Köybaşı Fikret Köybaşı	Mahmut Köybaşı	
14. He was wounded in the neck.	Fikret Köybaşı Mahmut Köybaşı	Report of autopsy on body of Haşim Köybaşı	Metin would point toward his throat to indicate where he (in the previous life) had been wounded.

Table 6-1 *(continued)*

Item	*Informants*	*Verification*	*Comments*
15. His brother was near him when he was shot.	Fikret Köybaşı	Mahmut Köybaşı	This item refers to Haşim's brother Ali, who was killed in the same brawl as Haşim. (See also item 17.)
16. He was shot at Hatun Köy.	Fikret Köybaşı	Records of the trial of Süleyman and Kamil Köklü	
17. Ali was killed at the same time as he was.	Celile Köybaşı	Mahmut Köybaşı	Since Ali was wounded while he was trying to succor Haşim, the latter might have been aware of the wounding of Ali before he (Haşim) died. However, Haşim could not have been normally aware of Ali's death, because Ali did not die until a day after Haşim died. Perhaps the item can be explained as showing knowledge on the part of Metin of an event that occurred after Haşim's death.

Metin's Behavior Related to the Previous Life

Circumstances and Manner of Metin's Speaking about the Previous Life. Fikret Köybaşı (Metin's older brother) said that even before Metin could speak he would point with his finger to indicate where, in the previous life, he had been wounded. Presumably he pointed toward his neck, but Fikret did not state this. Neither of Metin's parents mentioned that he had made this gesture at such a young age. However, Mahmut Köybaşı said that later, when they would ask Metin to show where he (in the previous life) had been wounded, he would point to his throat.

Two stimuli of Metin's remarks about the previous life were seeing his father's weapons and seeing members of the Köklü faction in Hatun Köy. Either of these events could provoke expressions of his desire to kill the members of the Köklü party.

Metin's Attitude toward His Parents. Mahmut Köybaşı said that when Metin first began to talk, he did not wish to accept him and Celile as his parents. He said: "Süleyman is my father and Rahmiye is my mother." When he was about 1½ years old, he noticed that olive trees near his family's house were not bearing olives. His father heard him remark: "I must ask Rahmiye for an explanation of this."[4] This implied that he had greater confidence in Haşim Köybaşı's mother than in his own, at least with regard to arboriculture.

Metin's Attitude toward Süleyman Köklü. From an early age, Metin showed an attitude of vengefulness toward Haşim Köybaşı's murderer, Süleyman "Atwin" Köklü, and the members of his party in Hatun Köy. He would throw pebbles or direct obscenities at any of these people when he met them in the village. He said that he would avenge himself on them. He asked his father to let him have his (Mahmut's) rifle so that he could kill the members of the faction that had killed Haşim Köybaşı. Metin gave a simple explanation for this request: "I will kill them because they killed me." Mahmut Köybaşı felt it necessary to reassure me that he kept his rifle locked up and always had the key to its case with him. He told me also that when Metin asked for his weapons, he would tell Metin that he was too young to have them, but that he (Mahmut) had purchased them for Metin to have later. He may have intended this remark merely to pacify Metin; but it may also have expressed fantasies on Mahmut's part that Metin, after he grew up, would take revenge and kill off the family's enemies.

When I talked with Metin in 1970, he expressed a strong attitude of vengefulness toward Haşim Köybaşı's murderers.

Metin's Birthmark

As I mentioned earlier, Metin's parents noticed a birthmark on the right side of his neck when he was born. His sister Hulya and brother Fikret also said that they had noticed this birthmark at that time.

[4]I am not asking readers to believe that a 1½-year-old child used such advanced language. I have given (as translated to me) what Metin's father later remembered the sense of Metin's remark to have been.

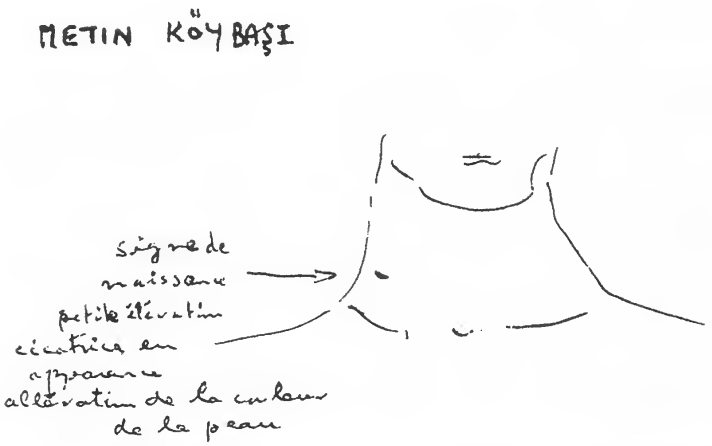
METIN KÖYBAŞI
le 8 novembre 1967
signe de naissance petite élévation cicatrice en apparence
élévation de la couleur de la peau

Figure 6-1 Sketch showing location and approximate size of birthmark on right side of neck of Metin Köybaşı in November 1967, when he was 4½ years old. This birthmark corresponded to the postmortem wound made in extracting the bullet from the right side of the neck of Haşim Köybaşı.

Celile Köybaşı said that the mark was a little elevated and seemed to be infected; but it did not discharge. Mahmut Köybaşı said that the birthmark was about the size of a fingernail when Metin was born. It was much smaller than this when I saw it in 1967. It was then about 5 millimeters long and 2 millimeters wide. It was located on the right side of the neck below the chin and right ear and about 3 to 4 centimeters from the midline. It was slightly elevated and a little darker in color compared with the surrounding skin. I noted that it had the appearance of a scar. Figure 6-1 reproduces a crude sketch that I made in 1967. It shows the approximate location of the birthmark. I did not photograph it at the time, as I wish I had done. (In 1967 I had not yet learned the rudiments of photography.)

By 1970 I was able to take photographs, but still did not have the skill or equipment for taking close-up photographs. Metin's birthmark on his neck had faded considerably during the 2½ years that had elapsed. It was barely visible to the naked eye and has not come out distinguishably in the photograph that I took. I have indicated its approximate location with an arrow in Figure 6-2.

A Second Possible Birthmark on Metin. During the initial interviews in 1967 and 1970, Celile Köybaşı had mentioned to me only the birthmark on the right side, anteriorly, of Metin's neck. On March 21, 1970, Reşat Bayer and I studied the transcript of the trial of Süleyman and Kamil Köklü for the murder of Haşim Köybaşı. The documents associated with the transcript included the report of the partial autopsy on the body of Haşim Köybaşı, from which I quoted earlier.

When I read (in the postmortem report) about the location of the entry wound on the left side of Haşim Köybaşı's neck, I thought that Metin might have a birthmark at a place corresponding to this wound of entry. On March 24 I examined the left side of Metin's neck and found some small hypopigmented papules in a somewhat circular pattern behind his left ear. They are not "at the center of the left side of the neck" as the postmortem report had described the wound of

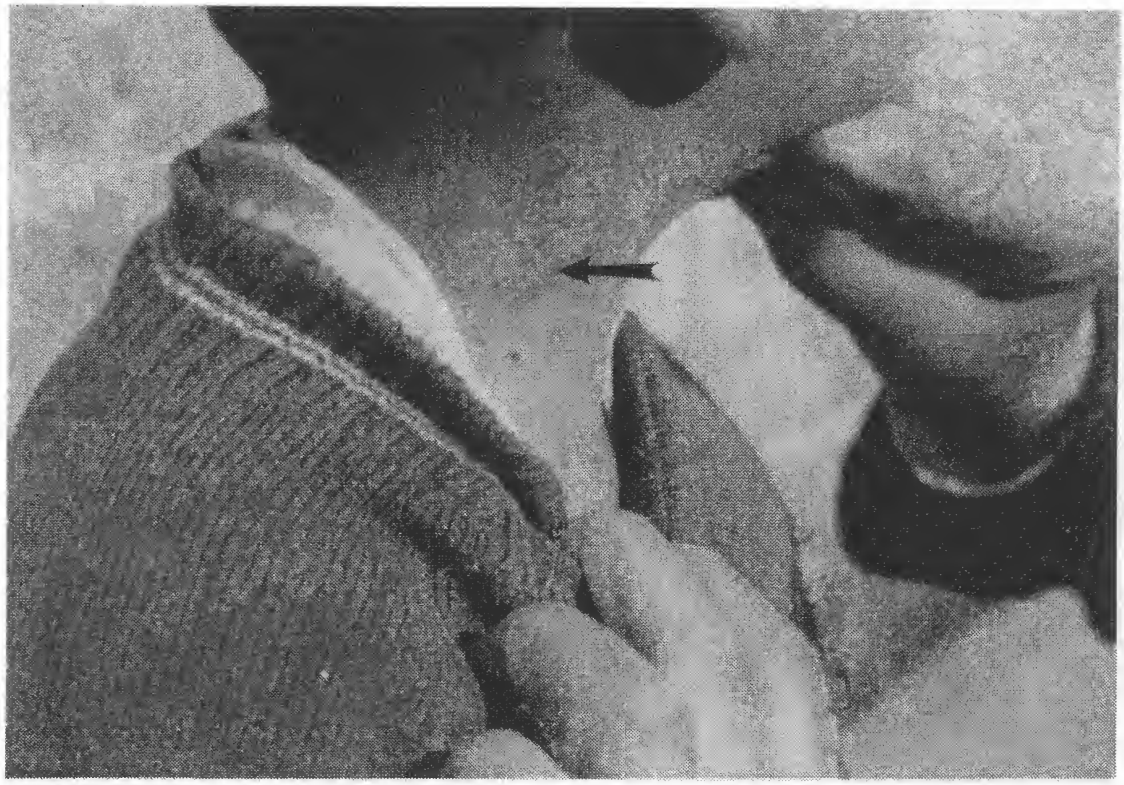

Figure 6-2 Photograph of Metin Köybaşı's neck in March 1970, when he was almost 7 years old. The arrow indicates the approximate location of the birthmark, which was barely visible to the naked eye. (A small hyperpigmented nevus inferior to the site of the birthmark is not relevant to the case.)

entry on Haşim. I thought, however, that this might be a birthmark or marks. When the photograph I had taken (by a professional photographer) was developed and printed, I noted a circular hyperpigmented macule lateral to the line of papules. It was about 1 centimeter in diameter (Figure 6-3).

The question then arose of whether the mark behind Metin's left ear was a birthmark or the result of some postnatal disease or wound. When he was born, his parents had noticed only one mark, that on the right side of his neck; and so had his older sister Hulya. Metin's older brother Fikret, alone of the members of the family whom I interviewed, said that he had noticed that Metin had two birthmarks, one on the right side of the neck and one on the left side. We are thus left in doubt as to whether the hyperpigmented macule and neighboring papules shown in Figure 6-3 were present at birth, although his parents' failure to notice them does not mean that they were not there when he was born. The larger, roundish mark that I now think is the main birthmark (on the left side of the neck) had increased pigmentation. It did not have the appearance of a scar, such as a postnatal wound would be likely to leave. I believe, therefore, that it is congenital and corresponds in location and shape to the wound of entry on the body of Haşim Köybaşı. However, I cannot be sure that my judgment about the mark's congenitality is correct.

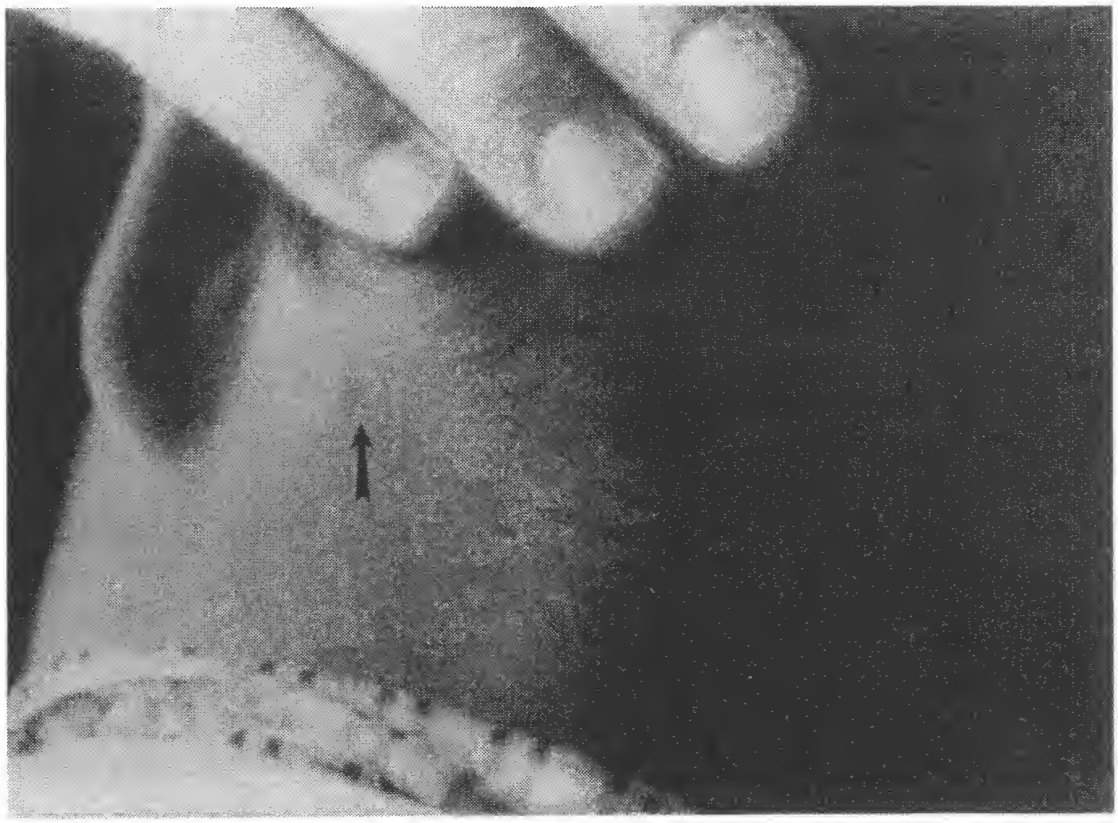

Figure 6-3 Marks on the left neck behind the ear of Metin Köybaşı. The arrow points to a hyperpigmented macule approximately 1 centimeter in diameter. Medial to this area there is a group of small round hypopigmented papules ranged in a somewhat circular line. These are possibly birthmarks corresponding to the wound of entry in Haşim Köybaşı.

Comment on the Anatomical Relationship between the Two Birthmarks. If we assume that the mark behind Metin's left ear is a birthmark corresponding to the wound of entry on Haşim, the pathway of the bullet in Haşim would not have been straight, if it destroyed the spinal cord as it traversed the neck. However, bullets that encounter bone, as this one did, are likely to be deflected and also slowed down (Fatteh, 1976). I believe this is why the bullet extracted from the right side of Haşim's neck was found somewhat anteriorly and also why it had not exited.

Comments on the Evidence of Paranormal Processes in the Case

The close contact between the two families before the case developed accounts for Metin's not having stated facts about the life of Haşim Köybaşı unknown to his family. Moreover, his parents' dreams and, to some extent, the birthmark on the right side of his neck prepared his family to believe that he was Haşim Köybaşı reborn. They may well have encouraged him in this role. After all, Haşim Köybaşı was a hero—a martyr even—of his family's faction in the village feuds; and his father told Metin that he had bought weapons for Metin to have

when he was older. So we should ask ourselves whether the encouragement Metin certainly received from his father, and perhaps also from his mother, would suffice to account for Metin's personation of Haşim. I do not think that it would, but other students of the case may disagree.

Uncertainties we may have about the correct interpretation of Metin's personation of Haşim accentuate the importance of his birthmarks. Since four persons in Metin's family testified to his having a birthmark on the right side of his neck, I do not think we can doubt that he did; and this birthmark corresponds fairly closely with the location of the bullet that was extracted from under the skin of the neck of the deceased Haşim Köybaşı. On the basis of the information in the postmortem record, I predicted that we would find a mark on the left side of Metin's neck corresponding to the wound of entry of the bullet that killed Haşim Köybaşı. We did find such a mark, and although its existence at Metin's birth is much less well attested to than is the mark on the right side, I believe that this mark, which is a hyperpigmented macule (surrounded by some hypopigmented papules), is a birthmark. If I am correct in this assumption, the correspondence between the two birthmarks on Metin's neck and the wounds on that of Haşim requires an explanation.

A further point arises in connection with the first and more prominent of Metin's birthmarks, that on the right side of his neck. The wound to which it corresponds was made after Haşim's death, during the postmortem examination of his body. Most birthmarks of the type considered in this book correspond with wounds or other marks made on the body of the concerned previous personality while he or she was still alive; but in some cases, the corresponding marks have been made soon *after* the death of the person concerned. Later chapters of this work include reports of other cases of this type.

Metin's Later Development

I last met Metin (and also his father) in March 1977. At that time Metin was almost 14 years old, in good health, and doing well in the secondary school that he was attending in İskenderun. He was in the first grade of this school, approximately equivalent to the ninth grade in the American school system.

He said that he still remembered the previous life but was gradually forgetting its details. He was likely to recall the previous life when he visited Hatun Köy, which he did about once a month. He seems to have gone to Hatun Köy mainly to visit an older brother, but while he was there Rahmiye Köybaşı would come to see him or he would go to see her. During his visits to Hatun Köy, he would often visit the tomb of Haşim's father, Süleyman Köybaşı. (Süleyman Köybaşı died in the late 1960s, but I do not know the exact year.) When I questioned Metin about the names of members of Haşim's family, he gave correct answers; but I attach little importance to this because all the persons concerned were his relatives, and he would have had many opportunities to hear their names on visits to Hatun Köy, as well as on other occasions.

I asked Metin about his attitude toward the murderers of Haşim Köybaşı. He said that he recalled them and that they were then out of prison. He said that he did not like them. When I asked if he still wished to kill them, he said that he preferred to let God do this. His formerly strong feelings of revenge had thus abated. He still felt that the murderers of Haşim deserved more punishment than they had received, but he no longer considered that he himself should be the instrument of their retribution.

When I talked with Mahmut Köybaşı (not in Metin's presence), he said that Metin still spoke about the previous life "all the time." He then recounted an episode that had occurred 2 years earlier and that showed the intensity of Metin's persisting identification with Haşim. It seems that Haşim Köybaşı's mother (Rahmiye Köybaşı) planned to sell a copper saucepan that had belonged to Haşim. It had had a special sentimental meaning for Haşim because his kirve (the sponsor of his circumcision) had given it to him. When Metin heard of this proposed sale, he became furious. He went to see Rahmiye Köybaşı and threatened to stop visiting her if she sold the saucepan. She thereupon cancelled her plan to do so.

THE CASE OF TALI SOWAID

Summary of the Case and Its Investigation

Tali Sowaid was born on August 3, 1965, in the village of Btebyat, Lebanon. His parents were Khattar Sowaid and his wife, Sharife. There were five other children in the family besides Tali, but I did not learn his order of birth among them. Khattar Sowaid was a laborer with a meager income barely sufficient for the support of his family.

The marks that I have identified as birthmarks on Tali's cheeks (Figures 6-4 and 6-5) were, in all likelihood, not noticed by his parents at the time of his birth; I shall later give reasons for nevertheless believing that these marks were congenital.

Tali's mother told me that as a baby he cried "day and night" and needed to be carried, and presumably comforted. I record this observation without knowing its significance, if any, for the case.

Tali was slow in speaking and, unlike all his other brothers, he did not learn to speak really well until he was about 3 years old. Even much later, in 1972 and 1973, he had a definite impediment of speech that is a relevant feature of the case.

As I shall explain below, as early as the age of 1½ Tali was making efforts to state the name of the person whose life he seemed to be remembering; but his family made little sense of these vocalizations until later.

While Tali was still struggling to speak effectively (between the ages of 2½ and 3½), he was able to say that he was Said Abul-Hisn of Btechney and that he had been shot after he had been drinking coffee. These statements, and a number of other details that Tali mentioned, all corresponded to facts in the life of a man

Figure 6-4 Birthmark on the left cheek of Tali Sowaid in November 1972 when he was a little over 7 years old. There was a circular formation of hyperpigmented macules, around an approximately circular area of slightly lessened pigmentation just anterior to the mandibular ramus. These macules were less prominent than those on the right cheek, and I have outlined them in ink. The outlined circle was about 1 centimeter in diameter. The area of pale skin anterior to the circle was probably congenital, but has no known relation to the case.

called Said Abul-Hisn who had been shot in the nearby village of Btechney on June 22, 1965, only a few weeks before Tali's birth. Khattar Sowaid said that Tali was 3 years and 2 months by the time he had said, and his family had understood, everything he did say about the previous life.

Some information about what Tali was saying spread back to Said Abul-Hisn's family, and one of his daughters, Wafa, came to Btebyat, where Tali recog-

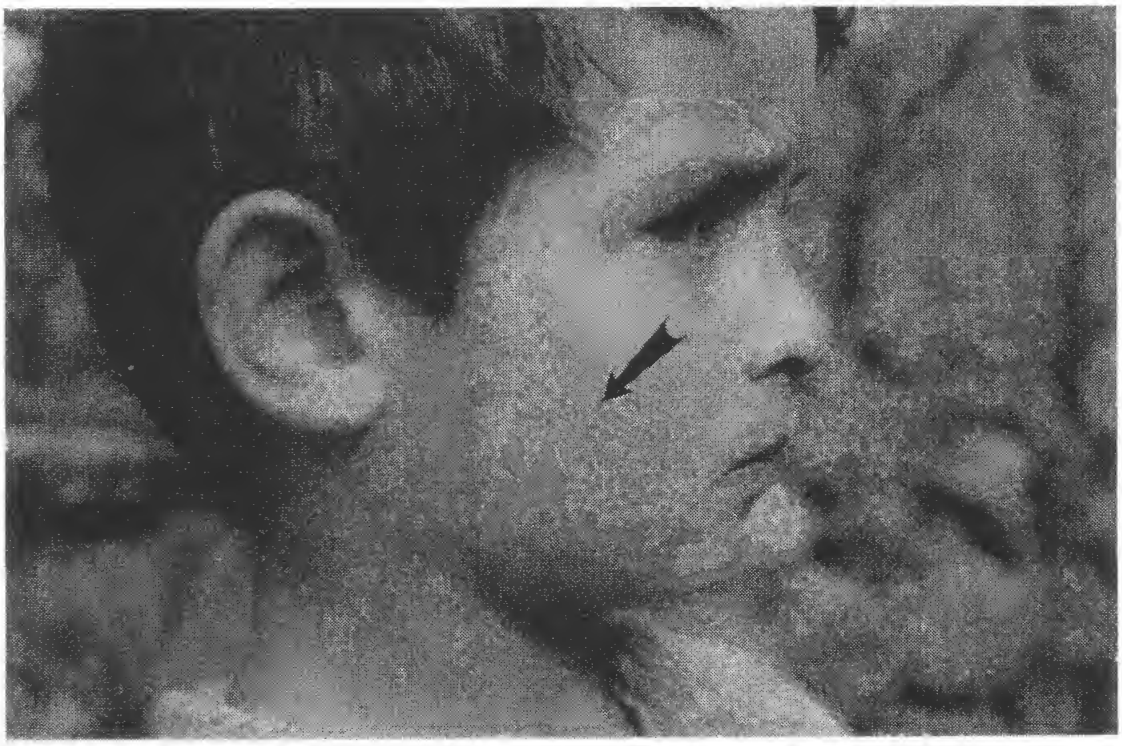

Figure 6-5 Birthmark on the right cheek of Tali Sowaid in March 1972 when he was 6½ years old. There was a circular formation of reticulated hyperpigmented macules anterior to the mandibular ramus. The skin within the circle was fractionally less pigmented than that outside it. The circle was about 1.5 centimeters in diameter.

nized her by name. Subsequently he recognized (also in Btebyat) a man who had been a friend of Said Abul-Hisn.

In the autumn of 1971 Issam Abul-Hisn, whose family lived in Btechney and who had been working with me as an interpreter, learned about the case and made a preliminary investigation of it. In March 1972, I was in Lebanon and studied the case with Issam Abul-Hisn. At this time Tali had not yet been to Btechney. This was not of Tali's willing, because he had been asking to go there for some years. He had indeed threatened to go there and stay, which is perhaps why his parents had never let him go, even for a visit.

It was infeasible for me to accompany Tali when he finally did go to Btechney for the first time; but after I left Lebanon in March 1972, Issam Abul-Hisn arranged to take him there. Tali made two recognitions in Btechney, but he failed to recognize a number of persons and places familiar to Said Abul-Hisn. I do not know the exact date of Tali's visit to Btechney, but it took place in the summer of 1972. Issam Abul-Hisn's written report of it was dated August 24, 1972.

In November 1972, I was again in Lebanon and continued studying the case at that time. In the meantime, I had written to Dr. Suleiman Abul-Hisn, who had operated on Said Abul-Hisn after he had been shot, and asked him to send me a report about the operation. He had replied in a letter giving information about the

location of Said's wounds and the operation he had carried out to repair the damage inflicted by the bullet that had passed through Said's lower jaw and tongue. I also examined and made notes from the admission record of Said to the Ras Beirut Hospital, where he was treated and where he died.

In February 1972, Issam Abul-Hisn interviewed one of Said Abul-Hisn's sons, Ramzi, who had been with his father when he was shot. I did not myself interview Ramzi Abul-Hisn, but Issam Abul-Hisn had a second interview with him in 1973. Also in 1973, Dr. Sami Makarem (accompanied by Issam Abul-Hisn) went to Btebyat for the express purpose of studying the speech impediment that Tali had and still showed. Arabic is Dr. Makarem's mother tongue, and, what is more important, he was Professor of Arabic Studies at the American University of Beirut. It seemed to me important to have his opinion on Tali's speech to supplement what his parents had told us about it.

In 1978 my assistant Majd Mu'akkasah Dean visited Tali and his family in Btebyat for a follow-up interview, and I have used her account of it in this report.

Persons Interviewed during the Investigation

In Btebyat I interviewed:

Tali Sowaid
Khattar Sowaid, Tali's father
Sharife Sowaid, Tali's mother
Salha Shaban, a neighbor of the Sowaid family and relative of Said Abul-Hisn

In Btechney I interviewed:

Kamal Abul-Hisn, Said Abul-Hisn's wife
Lamia Abul-Hisn, a neighbor of Said Abul-Hisn's family
Riad Abdul-Khalek, a friend of Said Abul-Hisn

I have already explained that I did not interview Ramzi Abul-Hisn, Said Abul-Hisn's son, but Issam Abul-Hisn did. An older son, Riad, had emigrated to Brazil before 1972 and so had an older daughter, Wafa, whom Tali had recognized earlier. Three other children of Said and Kamal Abul-Hisn were present during my first interview with their mother, but contributed little information.

Issam Abul-Hisn also interviewed Toufic Shaban, a neighbor of the Sowaids in Btebyat. Tali had found him a person willing to listen to what he had to say about the previous life.

Relevant Facts of Geography and Possibilities for Normal Means of Communication between the Two Families

Btebyat and Btechney are villages located about 20 kilometers east of Beirut in an area of moderately high mountains and valleys.

Btechney is a substantial village, and I estimate that it had at least 3,000 inhabitants at the time this case developed. Only Druses live there and, with a few exceptions, only members of the large Abul-Hisn clan.

Btebyat lies at the bottom of a valley below Btechney. One reaches it by an extremely steep and circuitous mountain road. The distance between Btebyat and Btechney is 4 kilometers, but it might seem longer to anyone who allowed his mind to dwell on what could happen if the automobile's brakes failed. Btebyat is arguably the smallest village in Lebanon. I do not think it had more than a dozen houses, but it could maintain a small school.

One cannot reach anywhere else from Btebyat without going through Btechney. It is therefore not surprising that the families concerned in this case had some prior acquaintance. Khattar Sowaid knew Said Abul-Hisn, but said that the two families had had no social relationships and did not exchange visits in their homes. This seems plausible in view of the large difference between the economic circumstances of the two families. I have already mentioned that the Sowaids lived close to poverty; but Said Abul-Hisn had prospered, and he and his family dwelt in a substantial house in Btechney. He had also traveled abroad on at least two occasions. The economic gap between the families was so large that it encouraged conjectures according to which Tali's family might have hoped to exploit his claims for their own benefit, and I shall have to consider this allegation later.

Sharife Sowaid had been treated in a hospital some time before Said Abul-Hisn's death, and he had visited her there and brought her some chocolates. (This episode later figured among Tali's memories.) When Said Abul-Hisn died, Khattar Sowaid attended his funeral, but Sharife, who was pregnant with Tali at the time, did not.

A neighbor of the Sowaids in Btebyat, Salha Shaban, provided another link with the family of Said Abul-Hisn, because she was somehow related to them (I did not learn how).

In sum, the two families concerned certainly knew each other and had a friendly acquaintance, although they did not move in the same social circles. Everything known in Btechney about the shooting of Said Abul-Hisn would have been equally well known in Btebyat.

The Life, Death, and Character of Said Abul-Hisn

Said Abul-Hisn was born in Btechney in 1919. He was the son of Najid and Hawla Abul-Hisn, who had, according to a genealogy furnished to me by Said's wife and daughter, nine other children. When Said grew up, he worked as a bus driver, truck driver, and merchant. He succeeded well in these enterprises and was able to erect at Btechney a rather imposing house set back in its own grounds. He married a girl called Kamal, also an Abul-Hisn, and they had seven children. The oldest of these, a daughter called Raja, developed, when she was only 8 years old, a severe edema of her left leg, which, at the time I met her in 1972, was twice the size of her right leg. The doctors in Lebanon were unable to treat this unusual (for

Lebanon) condition, and Said had taken Raja to Egypt for a medical consultation there, but without obtaining any help. He was contemplating taking her to Germany for a further medical examination at the time he was shot. I mention these details partly because they show Said's prosperity; journeys to other countries for medical diagnosis and treatment are not within the reach of most Lebanese people. Raja's illness had obviously concerned Said deeply; and Tali's failure to include Raja among his memories of Said's life is a puzzling feature of the case and contributed to skepticism about it on the part of Said's widow.

Said Abul-Hisn appears to have had some memories of a previous life. Riad Abdul-Khalek told me that Said had claimed that in his (Said's) previous life he had been Riad's grandfather. I did not learn further details of this claim or the evidence, if any, supporting it.

I learned little else about Said's life and personality. He appears to have been a kindly person, and this was shown not least by his friendly interest in an elderly poor relative named Badoura. She happened to pass by his house on the morning that he was shot, and one of his last actions before that was to invite her to take a cup of coffee with him. Said Abul-Hisn smoked cigarettes (from Jordan), but I learned nothing about any other habits or addictions, if he had any.

Said Abul-Hisn's house had a pleasant terrace outside its front door. This terrace faced the main road of the village from which a short roadway within the private grounds led up to it. Early on the morning of June 22, 1965, Said Abul-Hisn sat on this terrace and drank a cup or two of coffee before it was time to leave for work. Thinking that he was about to leave for work, his wife, Kamal, went back into the house. One of his sons, Ramzi, who was then a boy of 11, remained on the terrace with his father. Suddenly a man climbed over the low wall by the terrace and advanced with a pistol toward Said Abul-Hisn. Ramzi saw the menace and shouted a warning to his father, but it was too late. The man fired, and the bullet from his pistol passed through both sides of Said's mandible. He fell to the ground. The assailant then tried to fire again, but his pistol jammed and he fled. He was captured and identified as Ramez Hassan Abul-Hisn. I shall next say something about him and the attempts made to make sense of his crime; afterward I shall return to describe the treatment and death of Said Abul-Hisn.

Ramez Hassan Abul-Hisn had no quarrel with Said Abul-Hisn. They knew each other as all Abul-Hisns of Btechney must, but there was, as far as anyone could tell, no reason whatever for Ramez to have wished to kill Said. Ramez himself never explained what he had done. A possible explanation emerged as follows. Ramez had been a "normal, peaceful person" until about 1964. At that time he had worked for a time as a guard in an isolated mountainous area beyond Falougha (a town in the mountains more elevated than Btechney). Hyenas ranged over the area Ramez was supposed to be guarding and made him anxious. When he met villagers during this period, he seemed to have hyenas on his mind, and it was thought that they might have unhinged him. Then Ramez had a fight with a man called Riad who lived in Kornayel, a nearby village. The quarrel came to physical violence in which Ramez was wounded, so that he may have nourished a

grievance against Riad. In this situation Said Abul-Hisn had two disadvantageous qualifications: he was friendly with Riad, and he somewhat resembled Riad physically. Riad used to visit Said. It was thought that Ramez, seeing Said sitting on his terrace, mistook him for Riad and shot at him with the hope of killing Riad.

The trial court considered Ramez to have been crazed at the time he shot Said, and they accordingly committed him to a psychiatric hospital where he subsequently died, in August 1973. This disposal of the case was unsatisfactory to most of the people of Btechney, who expected some strong punishment. They showed their displeasure by remaining away when Ramez's funeral was held in Btechney.

To return to Said, whom we left lying wounded on the ground, he was transported to Ras Beirut Hospital in Beirut, where his wounds were examined and he was treated surgically. In the hospital record of his admission (which I examined myself on November 22, 1972) I noted the following:

> Admitted with a bullet wound entering face on left side, shattering rami of mandible on both sides and going through the base of the tongue.
> Operation: General anesthetic with intubation; debridement of wounds, severe bleeding from tongue stopped by suturing with catgut.
>
> The shattered mandible exposed on both sides, reduced and held with steel wires. Wounds closed on mucosal and skin sides.
> Tracheostomy done.
> At 5.00 p.m. had respiratory difficulty. Cardiac arrest. Open heart massage. Died.

This entry was dated June 22, 1965.

In the letter to which I referred above, Dr. Suleiman Abul-Hisn, who had operated on Said Abul-Hisn, gave much the same information, and he probably consulted the hospital record as well as his memory before he wrote me, on August 25, 1972, as follows:

> Said Abul-Hisn was admitted to our hospital on June 22, 1965 with a bullet wound of the face that passed from the left to the right side, shattering the mandibular rami, and, going through the root of the tongue, cutting the muscles, lingual vessels, and hypoglossal nerve. The external wounds were at similar locations on both sides: anterior to the angles of the mandible, and between the posterior and middle thirds of the rami, which were shattered by the bullet at these locations. Said passed away on the same day.

Said was 46 years old when he died.

Additional Secondhand Information. The medical record gives no information about what events preceded the "respiratory difficulty" there noted. A tracheostomy (with a tube inserted into the opening in the trachea) was necessary to provide an airway when Said's pharynx became blocked by the swelling of his

wounded tongue and neighboring tissues. Kamal Abul-Hisn was not present when Said died, but she learned informally—perhaps from nursing staff at the hospital—that Said fell out of his hospital bed. As he did this his tracheostomy tube became displaced, and he died of asphyxiation before the tube could be replaced.

Statements and Recognitions Made by Tali

When Issam Abul-Hisn opened the investigation of the case in the autumn of 1971, and even when I first began to study it in March 1972, Tali had not yet been to Btechney. Yet at these times his talk about the previous life was still in full spate, and I recorded a large number of details about the life of Said Abul-Hisn, including the names of 10 family members, that Tali fluently stated on March 4, 1972. However, by this time one of Said's daughters, Wafa, had visited Tali in Btebyat, and it seems better to consider important only the statements we can be reasonably sure he made before that time. Accordingly, Table 6-2 lists first (items 1-12) the statements that Tali made, so far as I know, before Issam Abul-Hisn began our study of the case in late 1971. Item 13 is a statement Tali made at the time of his visit to Btechney in the summer of 1972. I have placed it next to item 12 because it to some extent corrects an error that Tali made in stating that Said's son Riad had warned him to watch out just before he was shot. (It was another son, Ramzi, who had done this.) This error was not Sharife Sowaid's, because Tali himself (in March 1972) repeated the mistake of saying Riad instead of Ramzi.

Items 14 and 15 occurred when Said's daughter Wafa went to meet Tali at Btebyat. This meeting or these meetings—there may have been two—occurred some time in 1969.

Item 16 occurred in October 1970. I do not know when item 17 occurred, but place it at some time within the years 1969-1971.

The next two items (items 18 and 19) all occurred in the summer of 1972 at the time of Tali's first visit to Btechney. Tali failed to make any other recognitions during this visit to Btechney. He did not recognize the place in the house where Said Abul-Hisn had slept or the place where he had kept his gun. Tali also failed to recognize Said's wife, Kamal, his son Ramzi, his daughter Raja, a photograph of another daughter, Wafa, or a photograph of Said Abul-Hisn himself. Kamal Abul-Hisn later thought Tali's failure to recognize places and persons at Btechney weakened his claim to be her husband reborn. However, there was one "near miss" among Tali's failures, and there were mitigating circumstances for the other failures; I think these deserve brief mention.

When Issam Abul-Hisn and Tali approached the house, they found Said's son Ramzi sitting on the terrace more or less at the place where Said had been shot. Issam Abul-Hisn asked Tali whether he knew "this person." Tali replied: "Yes. This is Riad." Riad was the older of Said's two sons, but he was said to resemble his younger brother Ramzi in physical appearance. (Issam Abul-Hisn had met Ramzi, but neither he nor I met Riad.) Moreover, in the 7 years that had elapsed since the death of Said Abul-Hisn, Ramzi had grown up from the boy of

Table 6-2 **Summary of Statements and Recognitions Made by Tali**

Item	*Informants*	*Verification*	*Comments*
1. His name was Said Abul-Hisn.	Khattar Sowaid, Tali's father Sharife Sowaid, Tali's mother Toufic Shaban, a neighbor of the Sowaid family	Kamal Abul-Hisn, Said Abul-Hisn's wife	
2. He had a wife.	Sharife Sowaid	Kamal Abul-Hisn	
3. He had a daughter, Wafa.	Sharife Sowaid	Kamal Abul-Hisn	
4. He was from Btechney.	Khattar Sowaid Toufic Shaban	Kamal Abul-Hisn	
5. He had visited Sharife Abul-Hisn when she was in the hospital and brought her some chocolates.	Sharife Abul-Hisn	Sharife Abul-Hisn	
6. There were many lights in front of his house.	Khattar Sowaid	I saw these numerous lights that were placed at either side of the roadway leading from the main road to Said Abul-Hisn's house in Btechney.	
7. He was shot.	Sharife Sowaid	Kamal Abul-Hisn Records of Ras Beirut Hospital	

8. He lost two teeth when he was shot.	Sharife Sowaid	Unverified	See text for full discussion of the wound Said Abul-Hisn received. The medical reports did not mention damage to teeth, but in view of the severe injuries to both of Said's mandibular rami, the adjacent teeth might also have been damaged.
9. Just before he was shot he was drinking coffee.	Sharife Sowaid Lamia Abul-Hisn, a neighbor of Said Abul-Hisn	Kamal Abul-Hisn Lamia Abul-Hisn	
10. He invited a woman called Badoura, who was passing by, to have a cup of coffee.	Sharife Sowaid	Kamal Abul-Hisn	
11. His wife went in the house to bring another cup of coffee.	Sharife Sowaid	Kamal Abul-Hisn	It was true that Kamal Abul-Hisn had entered the house at the time Said was shot. In Kamal's recollection later, however, Badoura had declined the invitation to drink a cup of coffee. Said Abul-Hisn then seemed to be getting ready to leave for his work, and so Kamal went back into the house just as the murderer approached and shot Said.
12. He heard his son Riad say "Father, watch out" just before he was shot.	Sharife Sowaid	Partly incorrect	It was Said's son Ramzi, not Riad, who called out to warn his father that he was about to be shot.

Table 6-2 *(continued)*

Item	*Informants*	*Verification*	*Comments*
13. Ramzi was with him when he was shot.	Lamia Abul-Hisn	Ramzi Abul-Hisn, Said Abul-Hisn's son	
14. Recognition of Wafa, Said Abul-Hisn's daughter	Sharife Sowaid Salha Shaban, a neighbor of the Sowaid family		Wafa was seated in the house of one of the Sowaids' neighbors in Btebyat together with four other girls. Tali was sent for and came to the house with his mother. He was then asked: "Do you know your daughter?" He pointed to Wafa, sat beside her, and also gave her name, "Wafa." He said to her: "Why don't you come and visit me?"
15. Recognition of a watch that Wafa Abul-Hisn was wearing	Khattar Sowaid Kamal Abul-Hisn		I do not know when this recognition took place. If Tali made it at the time he recognized Wafa (item 14) or at least during the same visit of Wafa to Btebyat, I find it surprising that neither of the informants for that recognition mentioned Tali's statement about the watch. Wafa might have made two visits to Btebyat. (As mentioned in the text, I could not meet her.) I think, but am not positive, that Khattar was a firsthand witness of the recognition. Kamal Abul-Hisn was a secondhand informant for the item. She did not go to Btebyat with Wafa, who must have told her

16. Recognition of Riad Abdul-Khalek	Sharife Sowaid Khattar Sowaid Riad Abdul-Khalek, a friend of Said Abul-Hisn

mother later about the incident.
Khattar Sowaid stated that Tali had said that he (as Said) had brought the watch for Wafa from Egypt. This was incorrect. If Tali did refer to Egypt in this connection, his error might have occurred because Said Abul-Hisn had visited Egypt not long before his death.
Kamal Abul-Hisn said that Tali had recognized the watch that Wafa was wearing as belonging to Kamal, which was true. Said Abul-Hisn had brought the watch for Kamal from Kuwait.

According to Sharife Sowaid (with whose account Khattar Sowaid concurred), Riad Abdul-Khalek came to Btebyat and asked to see the boy who was saying that he was Said. When Tali was shown to him, he asked Tali: "Do you know me?" Tali replied: "Yes, you are Riad."
Riad Abdul-Khalek agreed with this account, but he said that before he met Tali, Tali had spontaneously recognized him and that Sharife Sowaid had told Riad about this. However, Sharife did not remember that Tali had spontaneously recognized Riad Abdul-Khalek and denied that he had done so.

Table 6-2 *(continued)*

Item	*Informants*	*Verification*	*Comments*
17. Recognition of Anis Abdallah, a former partner of Said Abul-Hisn	Sharife Sowaid		Anis Abdallah happened to be visiting Btebyat when Tali recognized him and said: "This is my partner in the bus." Sharife learned Anis Abdallah's name, but did not verify whether what Tali had said about him was correct. Kamal Abul-Hisn, however, confirmed to me that more than 20 years before Said Abul-Hisn's death he had owned and run a bus in partnership with Anis Abdallah.
18. Recognition of way in Btechney to Said Abul-Hisn's house	Issam Abul-Hisn, assistant investigator of the case		Issam Abul-Hisn took Tali from Btebyat to Btechney and there asked him to lead the way to "his" house. Walking in front of Issam Abul-Hisn and Tali's brother Khalid, who were the only other persons in the group, Tali led the way to Said Abul-Hisn's house, pointed to it, and said: "This is my house." I did not learn from Issam Abul-Hisn what distance through the village Tali led the way before they came to Said Abul-Hisn's house.
19. Recognition of place where Said Abul-Hisn had been when he was shot	Issam Abul-Hisn		When Issam Abul-Hisn asked Tali to show the place where "the accident" had occurred, Tali pointed toward the terrace in front of the front door and said that he had been sit-

			ting there drinking a cup of coffee when Ramez had approached and shot him. During this narration Tali stated (incorrectly) that he (as Said Abul-Hisn) had offered Ramez a cup of coffee. But he did then correctly go on to say that his son Ramzi (not Riad as in item 12) had warned him to watch out just before Ramez fired the pistol at Said.
20. In the hospital he fell out of bed.	Issam Abul-Hisn	Kamal Abul-Hisn	Tali made this statement in talking with Dr. Makarem in 1973, when Issam Abul-Hisn was present. Kamal Abul-Hisn's verification is secondhand. See text for further details.

about 11 that he had then been, and he had become a young man of 18. This was just about Riad's age when his father had been killed.

Inside the house many changes had been made after Said Abul-Hisn's death. Part of the house was rented to another family, and most of the rooms had to serve as bedrooms.

Outside the house, at the time of Tali's visit, a crowd of curious villagers assembled, and although Issam Abul-Hisn managed to keep them out of the house while Tali was inside (as I had failed to do in a similar situation in the case of Faruq Faris Andary), the noise of their agitated talk must surely have affected Tali in a way that could not have improved his memory. When Issam Abul-Hisn emerged from the house at the end of the visit, "most of the village was waiting outside...especially the old women. Everyone came to Tali and began to ask him: 'Do you know me?' 'Do you remember this?'...so Tali began to cry...." (I have here quoted Issam Abul-Hisn's written report to me.)

It remains for me to mention under this heading Tali's indication of the part of the body where Said had been wounded. It does not seem—and neither Khattar nor Sharife Sowaid claimed—that Tali, when young and first speaking about the previous life, had pointed to his cheeks at the sites where I found what I consider (stating why later) were his birthmarks. In 1972, however, when Tali was asked to show where (in the previous life) he had been shot, he pointed to his *right* cheek. (It was this pointing which first stimulated me to examine him for the birthmarks that I found on his cheeks.) He did this in March 1972 and again in November 1972. In fact, the bullet wound of entry on Said was in his *left* cheek, but there was an exit wound on the right cheek, and it would have been as large as the entry wound and probably larger. Probably this exit wound received more attention from the surgeons working on Said Abul-Hisn, and they may have communicated this emphasis to Said Abul-Hisn before he died.

Ramzi Abul-Hisn and his mother, Kamal, both told Issam Abul-Hisn that Said had been wounded by the bullet (that is, it had entered his body) on the right side, but this was clearly wrong, as the medical reports show. Their mistake was probably due to inattention and the common tendency to confuse right with left. Tali's mistake, however, (almost certainly) did not derive from theirs, because at the time (in March 1972) he made his first statement to me about the place where the bullet had entered Said's body he had not yet been to Btechney and had met neither Kamal nor Ramzi Abul-Hisn.

The Last Event in Said's Life Remembered by Tali. When Dr. Makarem visited Tali in 1973, Tali told him that the last event he remembered in Said's life was falling out of bed in the hospital (in Beirut). I mentioned earlier that we have only secondhand information (through Kamal Abul-Hisn) confirming that Said did fall out of bed. However, since such an incident is not creditable to a hospital staff, the person who told Kamal that her husband had fallen out of bed and then asphyxiated was not likely to have invented this detail. I think we can accept Tali's statement as correct, and it provides another example of a memory of an event occurring immediately before death. (I have included it in Table 6-2 as item 20.)

Tali's Behavior Related to the Previous Life

Circumstances and Manner of Tali's Speaking about the Previous Life. Like many other subjects of these cases, Tali needed no particular stimulus to talk about the previous life; it seemed to be on his mind almost constantly. After he became able to make coherent insulting remarks he would say: "This dirty house is not my house. I have a better one." His father said (in 1972) that Tali "always quarrels with us and wants to go to Btechney and live there." At other times, Tali swelled with generosity toward his family, and he would then tell his father: "You don't have to work. Tomorrow I will go to Btechney and get money for you."

Salha Shaban, a neighbor of the Sowaid family, said that she saw Tali on the roof of his house saying that he wanted his child. Then he would say that the child would come the next day. (I presume he imagined that he thought he might see the child sooner from the roof.) When (in March 1972) I asked Tali whom he would particularly like to see in Btechney, he replied that he wished to see his sons. Although he seems to have remembered the names of some of Said Abul-Hisn's daughters, he showed little or no interest in them compared with Said's sons.

Tali did not like to be called by his name and wished his family to call him "Said." His strong identification with Said continued at least until 1973 when Dr. Makarem went to visit him. Dr. Makarem asked him his name, and Tali replied: "Said." "Said who?" Dr. Makarem asked, and received the expected reply: "Said Abul-Hisn."

An early expression of Tali's strong identification with Said occurred when he was between 2 and 3 years old. Salha Shaban, who, as I mentioned, was related to Said Abul-Hisn, had kept a newspaper clipping with a photograph of Said Abul-Hisn. She showed this photograph to Tali, who gripped it tenaciously, would not return it, and slept with it under his pillow for some time.

Tali's Phobias. Tali's father said that he had a severe phobia of blood. His mother said that when he was young he had a great fear of having his face covered. He would say to her: "Do not cover my face. I will die if you cover my face." I did not learn why Tali's face would have been covered, but perhaps this happened when his mother would dry him with a towel after a bath.

Comment. I have conjectured that Tali's fear of having his face covered might derive from the general anesthetic (with a mask over the face) that Said Abul-Hisn had received when his jaw was operated on and a tracheostomy was performed.

Tali's Adult Interests. Tali expressed a wish to shave his face. He also wanted to smoke tobacco. (I neglected to enquire whether he asked to smoke the brand of cigarettes that Said Abul-Hisn had smoked.)

Tali's Vengefulness. The name of Ramez, the man who shot Said Abul-Hisn, does not appear to have figured in Tali's early memories of the previous life. Later, however, he either remembered the name or learned it normally. He expressed feelings of vengefulness toward Ramez. He said that he had a gun and that when he grew up he was going to get it and "kill the murderer." (The gun in

question was presumably that of Said Abul-Hisn, which Tali seemed to regard as his own. He certainly spoke of it in this sense in March 1972.)

The Attitudes of the Adults Concerned toward Tali's Memories

Khattar Sowaid seemed to me rather detached from Tali's case. He answered all questions cordially, but he completely lacked the enthusiasm for the case and the loquacity of his wife, Sharife. If Sharife did somehow improve the case, however, I am sure that whatever touchings-up she applied to it arose from an unreflecting garrulity, not from guile. I never observed her prompting Tali as I have sometimes noticed family members do in other cases (for example, in the case of Mounzer Haïdar).

I found no evidence that anyone in Tali's family had sought to gain in any way from the case. Issam Abul-Hisn had some trouble in persuading Khattar to let him take Tali to Btechney. A rumor had come down the hill from Btechney to Btebyat according to which Said Abul-Hisn's family did not wish Tali to visit because they thought it impossible for a man of Said's wealth and position to be reborn in such a poor family. This angered Khattar, so that Issam Abul-Hisn was obliged to obtain from Said Abul-Hisn's family in Btechney a denial that they had ever said anything of the kind. Issam Abul-Hisn brought this assurance back to Btebyat, and Tali was then released to go to Btechney with Issam Abul-Hisn, accompanied by his brother Khalid.

Nevertheless, Kamal Abul-Hisn regarded Tali's claim to be her husband reborn with marked reserve. She even suggested to me that Tali's parents had perhaps tutored him to make the statements with which he was credited. Kamal had no evidence that Tali had in fact been coached; her judgment against him derived from his failure to recognize members of the family when he came to Btebyat. She had particularly expected him to recognize Raja (in person) and Wafa (in a photograph), because both these girls had been ill during Said's lifetime and a source of much anxiety to him.

I shall make three points in considering Kamal's objections. First, like many informants for these cases she overvalued among all the available evidence that from recognitions, which in my view is usually the weakest of the evidential features of any case in which they occur. Second, Tali had recognized Wafa in person when she had come to Btebyat in 1969. She subsequently emigrated to Brazil, and I do not know to what extent the photograph of her shown to Tali in 1972 resembled her appearance when Tali had recognized her in Btebyat. Kamal candidly acknowledged that Wafa herself had been convinced that Tali had her father's memories. Third, the rumor of an expression of class snobbery that had so annoyed Khattar Sowaid might have originated in something Kamal had in fact said. Certainly the economic gap between the families was marked, which Tali himself lost no occasion for loudly proclaiming at Btebyat. It has happened in other cases that when the two families concerned in a case live in widely separated social and economic circumstances, the wealthier

family may be disinclined to accept the case as authentic and sometimes rejects it altogether.[5]

Tali's Birthmarks

Figure 6-5 shows the pertinent marks on Tali's right cheek just anterior to the mandibular ramus. There was a circular formation of reticulated hyperpigmented macules. The circle was about 1.5 centimeters in diameter. The skin inside this circle appeared to me fractionally paler than that outside the circle.

Tali had similar but fainter areas of reticulated hyperpigmented macules on his left cheek. The ink circle of Figure 6-4 indicates their location. On this side also the macules formed a circle about 1 centimeter in diameter, but the circle was less well defined than that on the right cheek.

With the exception of an area of hypopigmentation on his left cheek, Tali had no other birthmarks. So far as I could tell, his tongue was anatomically normal in the parts of it that I could inspect visually; and he had no mark on his neck at the site of the tracheostomy on Said Abul-Hisn.

Were the marks on Tali's cheek present at his birth? When (in March 1972) I first asked Khattar Sowaid this question (Sharife not then being present), he said that Tali had been born with the mark on his right cheek; but in a later interview (in November 1972) Khattar changed his statement and said that he and his wife had not noticed the marks on Tali's cheeks until I had pointed them out during my examination of Tali the preceding March.[6] Sharife confirmed this and said that she had not noticed the marks when Tali was born or afterward, it seemed, until I drew them to her attention. It might be said then that I discovered the birthmarks, as I have a few others. But were these marks birthmarks and not residues of some postnatal illness or injury? Both Khattar and Sharife affirmed that Tali had had no scratches or boils on his cheeks that might have accounted for the marks.

Sharife Sowaid believed in maternal impressions, and she said that the birthmark on the cheek of Tali's brother Mazid derived from an experience she had had

[5]Other examples of this type of reaction on the part of prosperous families occurred in the cases of Erkan Kılıç, Dolon Champa Mitra, Sunil Dutt Saxena, and (in this work) Maung Aung Than.

The subject of another case, almost contemporaneous with Tali's, lived in Btebyat. In this case also the subject was a member of a poor family who claimed to have belonged in his previous life to a much more prosperous one. It was in fact one of the most distinguished and wealthy of Druse families. One of this family's members was a Member of Parliament and a former Cabinet Minister. Some of the members of this family treated this case with great coolness, although others—to their credit with me—did not.

[6]One could suppose that Khattar's first statement arose out of a servile wish to please me and its reversal out of a greater fear of his wife, who was present when I met him again in November 1972; but Khattar showed no other signs of craven docility. A more likely explanation of his reversal is that he got Tali and his brother Mazid briefly confused. Mazid, the subject of another case, had a birthmark on his right cheek about the congenitality of which there can, I think, be no reasonable doubt.

when she was pregnant with Mazid. (I described this feature of Mazid's case in Chapter 3.) However, she did not suggest that the marks on Tali's cheeks were due to a maternal impression.

Comment. Furuncles (boils) sometimes leave scars that persist after healing. These, however, are often puckered and interrupt the smoothness of the skin, which Tali's marks do not. Scars from scratches tend to be linear, not circular like the group of marks on Tali's right cheek. One can conceive of similar scars being made if some round object of the right size and a rough surface had been pressed onto Tali's cheek enough to wound it. However, if Tali had fallen on some such object or otherwise been wounded by one, his parents would surely have remembered such an event.

If a reader accepts—as I do myself—that these marks on Tali's cheeks are birthmarks, we cannot leave them without noting that they are slightly anterior to the rami of the mandible where the bullet traversed Said Abul-Hisn. We may conjecture that the birthmarks moved forward in position with the differential growth of the tissues on Tali's face as he became older. We cannot, however, know that this happened because the birthmarks were not noticed at his birth.

Khattar Sowaid said that Tali had never complained of pain in his tongue or mouth; but when Dr. Makarem asked him whether he had any pain, he said that he had and pointed to his lower jaw. I did not learn any more about this pain; Tali had not mentioned it to me, and I had failed to ask him about pain after his father told me that he had had none.

The Impediment in Tali's Speech

I have already mentioned that Tali was 3 years old—much older than any of his brothers—by the time he had acquired adequately intelligible speech.

His first efforts to talk about the previous life were noticeably unsatisfactory. Sharife Sowaid said that his early attempts (at the age of 1½) to say the name *Said* sounded like "Iys." He would say: "My name is Iys." She said that his tongue "was very heavy and he could not pronounce 'Said' clearly then." Khattar Sowaid heard Tali's first efforts to say the name *Said* as "Sai," without the final "d."

In March 1972, when Tali was 6½ years old, he was still having trouble with his articulation. I could notice this myself and observe that he pronounced "Abul-Hisn" without the first vowel so that it sounded like "Bul-Hisn." The Sowaids' neighbor Toufic Shaban said that Tali's best effort at saying "Btechney" was "Neikh." Issam Abul-Hisn noted that Tali did not have full control of his tongue. He would tend to get his tongue stuck between his teeth when he should have been holding it behind his teeth. Thus, for example, an attempt at saying "see" would sound instead like "thee."

As I mentioned earlier, observations of the kind just summarized led me to ask Dr. Makarem to give an opinion about Tali's speech impediment. Dr. Makarem (in 1973) made a special journey to Btebyat, accompanied by Issam Abul-Hisn. He confirmed that Tali still had imperfect articulation. Using examples

from English (as I have above), Dr. Makarem said that Tali had several different deficiencies. He tended to pronounce:

a) The "s" in "sugar" like the "s" in "measure."
b) The "s" in "Sammy" like the "z" in "zebra," that is, as "Zammy."
c) The "ch" sound in "much" like the "dg" sound of "smudge."

Dr. Makarem noted that Tali could pronounce words correctly if he made a special effort to do so, and from this he concluded that Tali was not modeling his unusual pronunciation on another person. He also pointed out that the correct pronunciation of the "s" sound in "sugar" requires adequate lifting of the tongue upward toward the palate.

Comment. Tali's disability in speaking accords with what we should expect from an interference with the function of the tongue that might have occurred from traumatic injury to it. If Said had survived after his wounding, his tongue, which the bullet traversed, would almost certainly have been permanently impaired and therefore also his speech. Tali showed the impediment that Said would probably have had if he had lived.

Tali's Later Development

I described Tali as still talking freely about the previous life in November 1972. However, his mother said that, although he "always talks" about it at home, he was becoming shy about discussing the previous life with other persons away from Btebyat.

In November 1972 Tali was attending the village school of Btebyat in the second grade. In a class of seven or eight pupils he was always first or second in rank.

On December 29, 1978, Majd Mu'akkasah Dean went to Btebyat, at my request, for a follow-up interview about the case. Tali was then about 13½ years old. He was attending school in the first class of secondary school and enjoying good health. He had stopped talking about the previous life about a year earlier.

The only remarkable development in the case since I had last met the Sowaids was their decision to change Tali's name to Said. He insisted persistently that his name was Said, and they ended by capitulating to his wishes in the matter. His Lebanese identity card was officially changed to record his new name.[7]

[7]In some other cases the subject has refused to respond to his given name and insisted on being addressed by the previous personality's name. Some of the subjects grow out of this obstinacy, whereas others persist in it, and their parents ultimately yield to their demand. The parents of İsmail Altınkılıç eventually had his name officially changed to that of the man, Abit, whose life he remembered.

Four other subjects who obstinately insisted on being called by the previous personality's name are Necip Ünlütaşkıran, Mehmet Samioğlu, Ma Choe Hnin Htet, and Cemil Fahrici.

THE CASE OF ALAN GAMBLE

Summary of the Case and Its Investigation

Alan Gamble was born in Hartley Bay, British Columbia, Canada, on February 5, 1945. His parents, both members of the Tsimshian tribe, were Clarence Gamble and his wife, Flora. Clarence Gamble was a trapper and fisherman. Alan was the youngest of three children born to his parents. He had an older brother and an older sister. His parents also adopted another daughter.

Shortly before Alan's birth, his father dreamed that his deceased adoptive brother, Walter Wilson, came to him and said that he was returning to the family. In the dream Walter Wilson further said that he would have to go to the hospital one more time before his arm was healed. This was an allusion to the manner of Walter Wilson's death; he had died (on February 18, 1942) of gangrene after he had accidentally shot himself in the wrist. Flora Gamble, who described her husband's dream to me (he being incapacitated), said that he had had it "just before" Alan was born; I take this to mean that the dream occurred within a few days or weeks at most of Alan's birth.

Alan was born with two birthmarks on his left hand and wrist (Figures 6-6 and 6-7). I shall describe these later. Soon after his birth his left arm began to swell below the elbow, and the swelling then spread alarmingly down to the hand. Alan was admitted to the Prince Rupert Regional Hospital for this illness and recovered from it.

When Alan was a young child, he made statements indicating that he had some memories of Walter Wilson's life. The memories were largely of the events related to Walter's death.

In May 1977 Dr. David Barker accompanied me on a field trip to northwestern North America during the course of which he went from Prince Rupert to Hartley Bay to continue the study of a case that I had begun to investigate there earlier and to learn about new cases. In Hartley Bay he informed villagers about our interest in cases of the reincarnation type, and Alan Gamble came forward as an informant for his own case. At that point Dr. Barker was about to catch a flight back to Prince Rupert, but he managed to have a brief interview with Alan and to obtain the name and address of his mother, who lived in Prince Rupert. Back in Prince Rupert he met me at the seaplane dock, and we went together almost immediately to meet Alan's mother. (Alan's father, elderly and ailing, was not available as a witness.) We then went to meet and interview Leonard Davidson, who had been with Walter Wilson when he had shot himself. He was the sole witness of the accident.

In 1979 I met Alan Gamble for a further interview in Hartley Bay. In 1980 I interviewed his older sister, Betty Hendricks, in Vancouver.

I was unsuccessful in obtaining the record of Walter Wilson's admission to the Prince Rupert Regional Hospital, to which he had been taken after he had shot himself. (The hospital had destroyed its records from years earlier than 1959; and

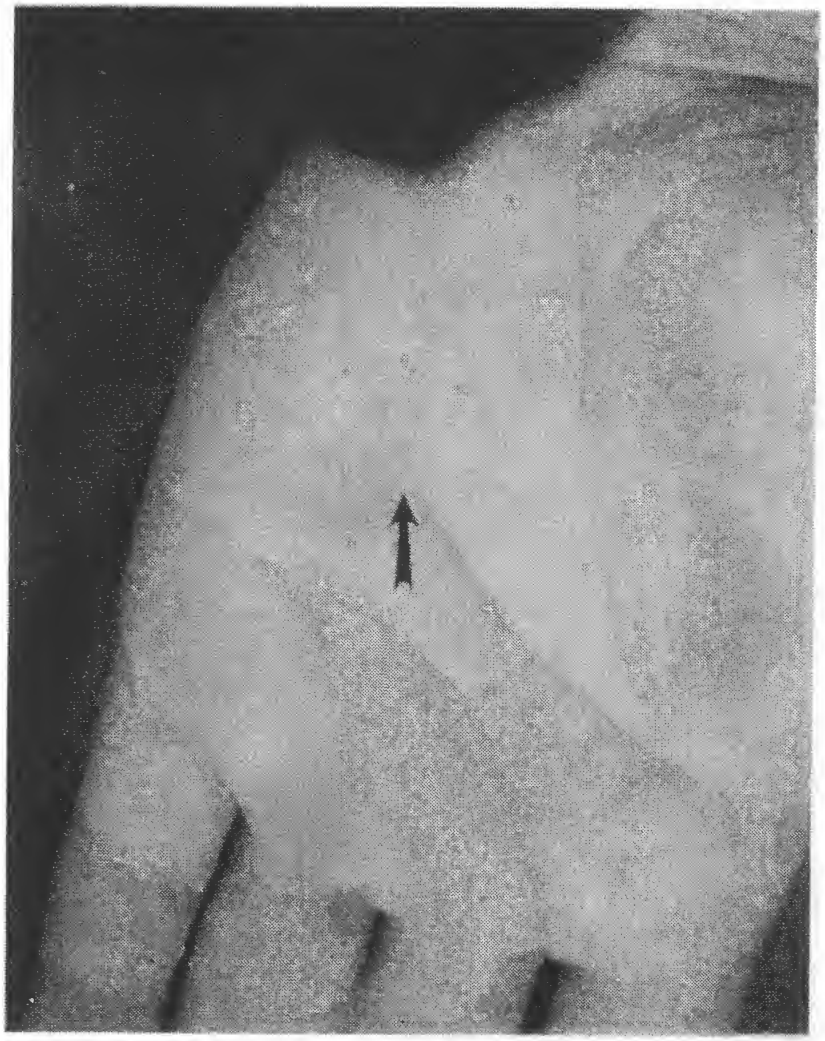

Figure 6-6 Birthmark on palm of Alan Gamble as it appeared in 1979, when he was 31½ years old. The arrow indicates the small scarlike birthmark that corresponds to the wound of entry on Walter Wilson.

this meant that the record of Alan Gamble's admission as a baby to the same hospital was also unobtainable.) I did, however, obtain from the Division of Vital Statistics, British Columbia, extracts from the registry of deaths pertaining to the wounds and cause of death of Walter Wilson. (I shall cite these below.)

The Life and Death of Walter Wilson

Walter Wilson was born in 1921. He was a Tsimshian. I know little about his life except that he worked as a fisherman and married when he was 19. He lived at Hartley Bay. He was about 21 years old when he died.

The only firsthand informant for the accidental injury from which Walter Wilson died was his companion, Leonard Davidson. (Leonard had married Walter's sister, so they were brothers-in-law.) Early in February 1942 he and

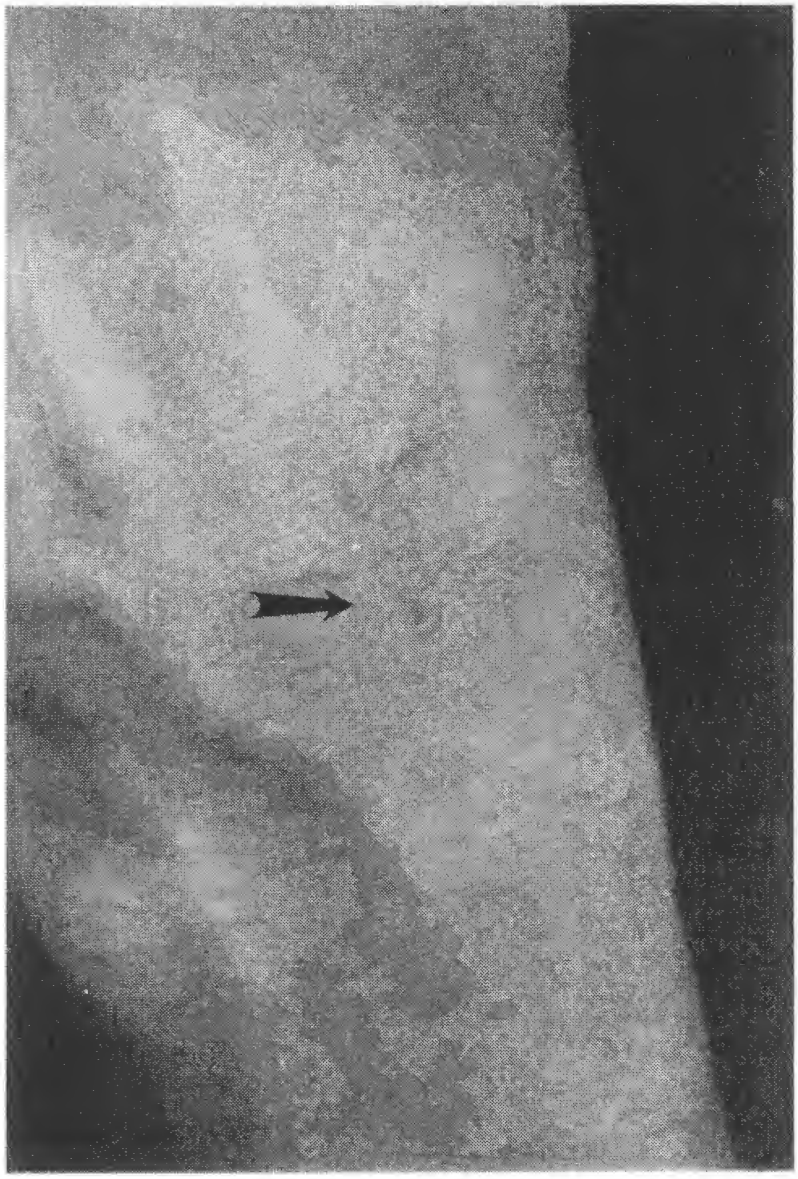

Figure 6-7 Birthmark on dorsum of wrist of Alan Gamble as it appeared in 1979. It was an erythematous scarlike area about 8 millimeters in diameter.

Walter Wilson, together and without other companions, set out from Hartley Bay in a small "gill-netter" fishing boat. They were towing a skiff. At one point the boat came close enough to the shore so that Walter Wilson could see a mink running near the water, and he thought that he would take a shot at it. His gun—a 12-gauge shotgun—was in the skiff with the barrel pointed toward him. From the stern of the boat he pulled the skiff toward him and reached for the gun with his left hand. He had grasped it when it somehow slipped, so that the butt fell down and struck a board of the skiff. The gun went off and shot Walter through the hand. Bone protruded from the wound, and there was severe hemorrhage. Leonard Davidson applied a tourniquet to Walter Wilson's upper arm. Unfortunately, they were then far from help. It took several hours before their boat could reach a larg-

er seine boat to which Walter Wilson was transferred and in which he was taken to Prince Rupert. During this long journey Walter Wilson lost consciousness and appears never to have regained it. It was night before he was admitted to the Prince Rupert Regional Hospital. In the meantime, the tourniquet had been left on his arm continuously for 10 hours. (Leonard Davidson did not know that a tourniquet should be released from time to time to permit some circulation to the parts below it.) Gangrene developed in the injured arm. An amputation at the upper third of the forearm was performed, but the wound became infected, and Walter Wilson died on February 18, 1942. According to Leonard Davidson, Walter Wilson died 4 days after being admitted to the hospital, but Flora Gamble (Walter's sister-in-law) estimated the interval at 11 days.

The death registration of Walter Wilson contained the following information:

> *Cause*: Gunshot wound left forearm, aggravated by a tourniquet in the middle of the left arm, left on for 10 hours.
> *Contributory Causes*: Septic infection in the wound and amputated stump, and shock.
> *Operation*: Amputation of left forearm, upper third, on account of gangrene.

The section of the death certificate formally classifying the cause of death attributed it to "accidental injury by firearms."

An inquiry into the death was held, and some persons, notably Walter Wilson's father, tried to blame Leonard Davidson. It was even alleged that he had shot Walter Wilson. I said above that Walter Wilson never regained consciousness after he became unconscious during the long boat journey into Prince Rupert. If he had regained consciousness, at least to the point of being able to speak clearly for a few minutes, he would have been asked to make a dying declaration, and his statement would presumably have completely exonerated Leonard Davidson. As it was, Leonard Davidson, although perfectly aware of his own innocence, had to endure false suspicions as well as his grief for the loss of a close friend.

Statements Made by Alan

Alan's mother, Flora Gamble, said that Alan "talked a lot" when he was young about the previous life; but she could recall few details of what he had said. The sight of shotgun shells—either the shells themselves or illustrations of them—would stimulate him to talk. He would say—with reference to the shells—that they were the cause of his having a sore hand. On one occasion he showed fear when he saw shotgun shells. His family evidently decided that his memories were troubling him, and they hid shotgun shells from his view.

Leonard Davidson recalled that Alan, as a young child, had described to him how he (in the previous life) had shot himself accidentally. This relieved Leonard Davidson greatly. Flora Gamble said that Leonard had cried when he heard Alan describe the accident. Alan's description of it removed the suspicions of wrongdo-

ing that had burdened Leonard Davidson since the time of the accident years earlier. Alan was between 6 and 7 years old at this time.

Flora Gamble described an incident (for which she was a secondhand informant) that showed a somewhat indirect expression of a memory of the previous life by Alan. Walter Wilson had a friend called Lewis Hill. Before they married they each had girlfriends, and Clara was the name of Walter's girlfriend. When Alan was between 5 and 6 years old, he met Lewis and asked him: "Who are you?" Lewis replied by asking Alan: "Who are you?" Alan replied: "Clara." He thus did not recognize Lewis Hill directly, but gave a correct association to him.

When I met Alan Gamble in 1979, he no longer had any primary imaged memories of the previous life. However, he contributed two observations about his memories. He recalled that when he had been younger and his father had mentioned various fishing camps to him, he thought that some of them seemed familiar and that he had been to these places. And later, when he actually visited fishing camps where Walter Wilson and his father had stayed, he had a sense of familiarity with them. He still had some dim memories of these places that he evidently thought might derive from the previous life. He said: "It is like a dream when you wake up in the morning and try to remember. I have these vague recollections of places, but not of any events." He knew about the fatal accident of Walter Wilson, but no longer had any memory of it. Similarly, he remembered some girls called Clara whom he had met (in this life, so to speak), but he could place no Clara in the previous life.

Alan's Behavior Related to the Previous Life

I mentioned above that on at least one occasion when he was a young child Alan showed fear when he saw a shotgun shell. This reaction had stimulated his family to hide shells from him. However, he does not appear to have had a severe or prolonged phobia of firearms. His older sister, Betty Hendricks, thought that he had never had any fear of firearms. When he became old enough to do so, he hunted with a gun.

Alan told Dr. Barker (in 1977) that his mother had remarked on a similarity of appearance and manner between himself and Walter Wilson. Flora Gamble did not mention this to us when we interviewed her, and I neglected to ask her a direct question about any such similarity. If there had been a resemblance between the two men, it would not have derived from genetic factors, because Clarence Gamble had been an adoptive brother of Walter Wilson, not a biological brother.

Alan's Birthmarks

The birthmark on the palm of Alan's left hand (Figure 6-6) was small, and I have indicated its location in the figure with an arrow. It was about 3 millimeters long and 1 millimeter wide. It was depressed about 0.5 millimeter below the surrounding skin and looked like a small scar. It did not differ in pigmentation from the surrounding skin.

The birthmark on the dorsal aspect of the left wrist (Figure 6-7) was notably larger. It was dark purple-red in color, generally round in shape, and about 8 millimeters in diameter.

Neither of the birthmarks had changed in position or size (in relation to each other and surrounding tissues) since Alan's birth.

Alan's older sister, Betty Hendricks, said that his left hand was swollen when he was born. She recalled seeing the swelling. His mother, however, said that the swelling of his left arm began "a day of two after" he was born. The swelling of the arm began at the site of the amputation on Walter Wilson's arm, that is, about one-third of the way down the forearm from the elbow. The swelling then extended down toward the hand until the entire lower part of the arm was swollen. Alan's parents took him to the Prince Rupert Regional Hospital for the treatment of this condition. He remained in the hospital for 2 or 3 weeks and recovered. (I have already explained that no records of this admission to the hospital were available.)

In childhood and later, Alan suffered intermittently from pain and swelling of the left arm. Once he had to leave a job because swelling of the arm interfered with his working. His mother thought that Alan had continued to have pain in his hand up to 1977, when I met her; but Alan denied this and (in 1979) said that he could not remember ever having had pain in his left hand. Talking about the previous life, for example with me, did not bring on any discomfort in his hand.[8] His left hand was functionally normal.

Comment. When Walter Wilson's gun discharged its shot, he must have had his fingers around the end of the barrel as he tried to lift the gun out of the skiff. Whatever shot hit him must have entered at the palm of the hand and exited more posteriorly. It thus seems correct to say that the birthmark on Alan's left palm corresponds to a wound of entry and that on the dorsal aspect of his wrist corresponds to a wound of exit. These were all the wounds Walter received before he lost consciousness during the long journey into Prince Rupert. Later, after gangrene had developed, the lower two-thirds of his forearm was amputated in an effort to stop the spread of infection. This amputated part of Walter's arm corresponded to the part of Alan's arm that swelled soon after his birth. But Alan was born with a complete and morphologically normal hand.

THE CASE OF SUNITA SINGH

Summary of the Case and Its Investigation

Sunita Singh was born in August 1967, in the village of Fatehpur Ghani, District Mainpuri, Uttar Pradesh, India. Her parents were Jagdish Singh and his

[8]A small number of subjects have experienced pain or other physical symptoms when they have talked about previous lives they remembered. I give a list of such subjects in the report of Chanai Choomalaiwong's case.

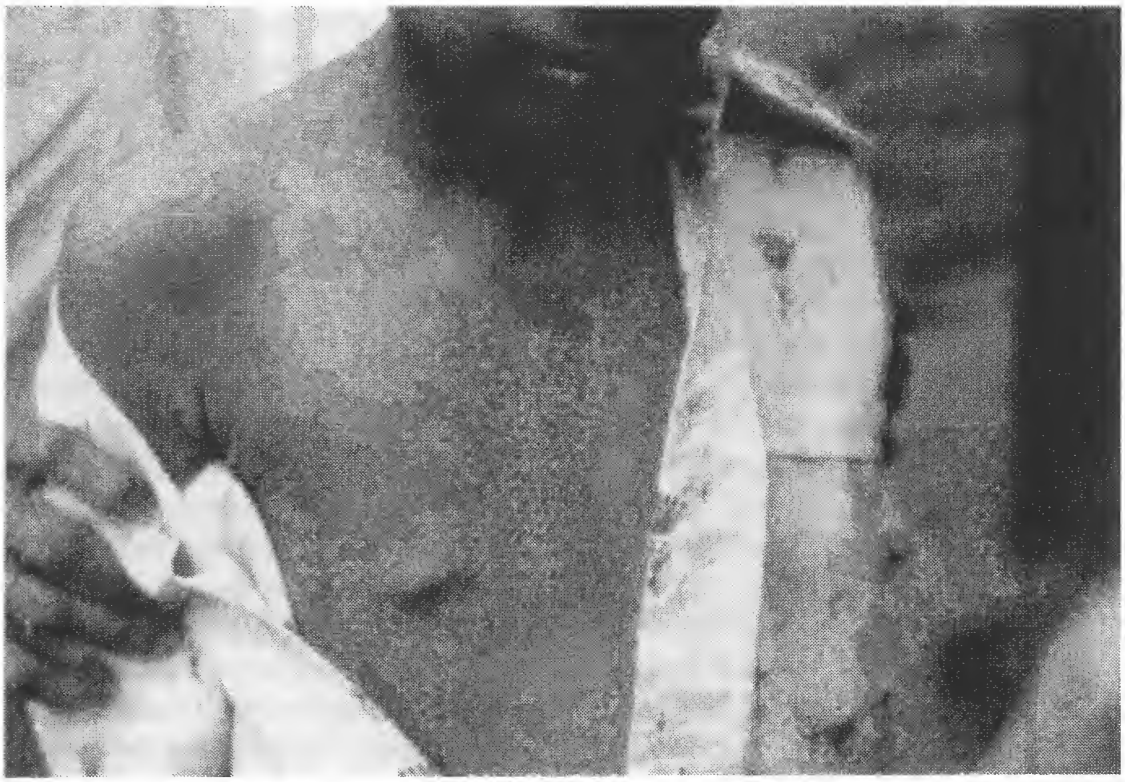

Figure 6-8 Extensive nevus flammeus on the right upper chest of Sunita Singh as it appeared in October 1979, when she was 12 years old.

wife, Savitri Devi. Jagdish Singh was a cultivator of the Thakur caste. Sunita was the oldest child of the family. She had two younger siblings.

Sunita was born, without complications of delivery, approximately 9 months after her parents' marriage.

When Sunita was born, she was noted to have widespread red birthmarks over her chest and right hand. They were mainly on her upper right chest and right arm (Figures 6-8, 6-9, and 6-10).

Sunita was able to speak clearly by the age of about 3, and at almost the same time her paternal grandmother, Bitto Devi, happened to take her to a neighboring village, Majhola, where Sunita noticed a man and said: "He is my son." She also gave his name, Ranvir. This remark precipitated quarrels among the villagers of Majhola, and Bitto Devi brought Sunita back to Fatehpur Ghani. Thereafter she spoke about how, in a previous life, she had been murdered by her daughter-in-law.

The case came to the attention of Balram Shastri, who was a government officer (*tehsildar*) of the area and a part-time journalist. He had a keen interest in these cases, and during the 1970s he published reports of about 10 of them in newspapers and magazines.

Balram Shastri visited Fatehpur Ghani and then took Sunita (with her father) on a second visit to Majhola. According to Jagdish Singh, Sunita's second visit to Majhola (with Balram Shastri and himself) took place about a month after

Figure 6-9 Part of the right arm of Sunita Singh showing the nevus flammeus on the medial side of the upper arm. This photograph was also taken in October 1979.

her first one, when she had gone there with her grandmother. These visits occurred toward the end of 1970.

Sunita was later remembered to have made only a few statements about the previous life. I cannot say whether she had additional memories when she was young or not. Her paternal uncle advised the suppression of her memories, and she stopped talking about them and later forgot them altogether.

An account of the case appeared in a publication called *Swatantra Bharat* on September 24, 1974. This was drawn to my attention during a visit to Mainpuri in October 1975. (Subsequently Balram Shastri published an account of the case in the February 1976 issue of a magazine called *Kanchan Prabha*.)

Figure 6-10 Lower part of the left arm and left hand of Sunita Singh as they appeared in March 1977, when she was 9½ years old. The nevus flammeus on the medial side of the hand, as well as the arm, can be seen.

Dr. Satwant Pasricha began our investigation of the case in October 1976. At that time she interviewed Jagdish Singh, his wife, Savitri Devi, and his mother, Bitto Devi; but she did not go to Majhola. In 1977 Dr. Pasricha and I had further interviews with members of Sunita's family, and we also interviewed some villagers of Majhola who seemed to be informed about the death of the person to whom Sunita had been referring. This was Ram Dulari, and she was the mother of Ranvir Singh, whom Sunita had recognized on her first visit to Majhola. In October 1977, we obtained a report of the postmortem examination of Ram Dulari's body.

In October 1979, Dr. Pasricha and I returned to both villages for shorter periods in order to obtain some additional information.

In November 1988, Dr. Pasricha and I returned to Fatehpur Ghani, where we again met Sunita, by then a young married woman, and her parents.

Persons Interviewed during the Investigation

In Fatehpur Ghani we interviewed:

Jagdish Singh, Sunita's father
Savitri Devi, Sunita's mother
Bitto Devi, Sunita's paternal grandmother

In Majhola we interviewed:

Lakhan Singh, villager and distant relative of Lalla Singh, Ram Dulari's husband
Surender Singh, villager and distant relative of Lalla Singh
Ranvir Singh, Ram Dulari's son
Ramvir Singh, Ranvir Singh's son and Ram Dulari's grandson

I have not listed Sunita as an informant, because by the time we reached the case she no longer remembered the previous life.

I have also omitted from the list of informants a number of villagers at Majhola who furnished fragments of (not always reliable) information about the murder of Ram Dulari.

Relevant Facts of Geography and Possibilities for Normal Means of Communication between the Two Families

Fatehpur Ghani and Majhola are small villages located in the Mainpuri District, northeast of Agra. They are about 1 kilometer apart. At the time of our investigation of the case we were told that Fatehpur Ghani had about 400 inhabitants and Majhola about 500.

The two families concerned in the case both belonged to the Thakur caste and were cultivators. We were told that Sunita's family was fractionally higher in caste status than Ram Dulari's. Sunita's family was also slightly better off economically than Ram Dulari's; but the social and economic differences between the two families were slight.

The two families knew about each other, but they seem to have had only a limited acquaintance before the development of the case, and almost no social relationships. I learned of one occasion when Ram Dulari's son, Ranvir, had visited Jagdish Singh's house in Fatehpur Ghani, but this was after the case developed.

The fact of Ram Dulari's having been murdered, and the rumors and more substantial conjectures associated with her death, were almost as well known in Fatehpur Ghani as in Majhola. However, Savitri Devi said that she had not known of Ram Dulari's murder until after Sunita began speaking about it. This is likely

because Savitri Devi came from another village, and she and Jagdish were not married until 1966, more than 5 years after Ram Dulari's murder.

The Life and Death of Ram Dulari

Ram Dulari was born at Sarri in the Hardoi District of Uttar Pradesh. She was married to Lalla Singh of Majhola and spent her adult life there. They had one son, Ranvir. (They may have had other children of whom I did not learn.) Lalla Singh died, and Ram Dulari lived on in the home with her son. He in turn had married and had at least two sons. Dr. Pasricha and I met one of these sons, Ramvir. Ram Dulari's brother also formed part of the ménage.

In her widowhood Ram Dulari and her daughter-in-law quarreled. It was said—I deliberately use an impersonal form—that Ranvir's wife flirted with other men or lapsed more seriously from complete fidelity to her husband. For this behavior her mother-in-law was thought to have rebuked her. The daughter-in-law then decided to have done with her mother-in-law and hired *goondas* (professional criminals) to kill her. For the occasion, a time when Ranvir was away from Majhola, in Agra, was chosen.

On the night of Ram Dulari's murder, Lakhan Singh heard Ram Dulari's daughter-in-law shouting: "Some thieves have come to our house." He, as a village elder, sent someone to look into the matter, and this man reported that Ram Dulari had been hurt. Lakhan Singh then went to Ram Dulari's house and found her unconscious and lying in a pool of blood. The nearest police station was about 1 kilometer away, and Lakhan Singh went there to report what had happened. It was the middle of the night, and the policeman on duty said that if Ram Dulari was alive she should be brought to the police station, but if she died during the night they would come in the morning. By the time Lakhan Singh returned to Majhola Ram Dulari had died.

As they had promised, the police came the following morning. Several suspects were rounded up and were tried. Although it was said that they confessed to the crime, they were acquitted.

Lakhan Singh said that the murderers had killed Ram Dulari with a sword. Presumably this information emerged from the appearance of the wounds (which he saw) and possibly from the confessions of the murderers. The autopsy report (which I shall describe below) did not conjecture a particular weapon, but the description of the wounds leaves no doubt that some kind of bladed weapon had been used.

Lakhan Singh had noticed that the fingers of one of Ram Dulari's hands—he could not remember which—had been cut, and he thought that this had happened when she had tried to grasp and deflect the sword with this hand.

Ram Dulari's body was taken to Mainpuri General Hospital where a postmortem examination was made. The report was dated March 29, 1961, and included a note that the autopsy was performed within 24 hours of the deceased's death, so I think we can say that the date of the autopsy is also the date of Ram Dulari's death.

After the autopsy Ram Dulari's body was returned to her family. According to the custom in that part of India her body was not brought into Majhola, but was cremated (without adherent blood being washed off) at a site outside the village near the highway.

Estimates (by villagers at Majhola) of Ram Dulari's age at the time of her death ranged between 40 and 50 years.

The Report of the Postmortem on Ram Dulari. The following are the salient details of the report of the autopsy:

> Injuries:
>
> 1. An incised wound three inches by one inch and to the depth of the cheek on the right side of the face continues from the outer angle of the mouth. The whole of the cheek has been cut through.
> 2. A puncture wound three inches by one inch by three inches on the right side extending from below the lobe of the right ear to the neck. The wound communicates with the oral cavity and with wound No. 1. This [second] wound exposed the sternomastoid muscle and the parotid gland.
> 3. A puncture wound one inch by half an inch by two inches in the supraclavicular region on the front of the right side of lower part of the neck. This wound connects with wound No. 2.
> 4. Puncture wound half an inch by half an inch by five inches on the right side of the chest medial to the breast and just outside [lateral to] the sternum.
> 5., 6., 7., and 8. [Several incised wounds on the palmar aspects of the fingers of the left hand are described.]
>
> Thorax:
>
> Blood was present in the right side of the chest wall. There was a penetrating wound in the fourth intercostal space on the right side.
>
> Pleura:
>
> The right pleural cavity contained blood.
>
> Right Lung:
>
> There was an incised wound about three inches by one inch by two inches in the lower lobe of the right lung.
>
> Large Vessels:
>
> The external jugular vein and facial veins had been cut on the right side of the neck [on the inner side] of injury No. 2.
>
> Death was due to hemorrhage and shock caused by the multiple injuries received during life.

Statements and Recognitions Made by Sunita

I have already mentioned that Sunita made few statements about the previous life. She seems never to have given the name Ram Dulari as that of the person

whose life she was remembering; but she did say: "I am Ranvir's mother." She also said that her daughter-in-law had "cut" her. She described how she had tried to open a door, but the daughter-in-law closed it again and in doing so crushed her (Ram Dulari's) right arm and made it bleed. She said that she could not escape, and someone then struck her on the neck and she died. She also said that her chest was pierced with a sword.

Comment. Although none of our informants were eyewitnesses of Ram Dulari's murder, Sunita's description suggests that when Ram Dulari became aware that the murderers had entered the house, she tried to escape by another door only to find the way blocked by her daughter-in-law. At the same time, the daughter-in-law raised the cry of "Thieves" to suggest robbery as the motive for the murder. Sunita herself did not state that the daughter-in-law had raised a cry of "Thieves," but in her mind later the daughter-in-law was clearly the agent in Ram Dulari's murder.

Sunita's Statement about Events between Ram Dulari's Death and Her Birth. Someone—I do not know who—asked Sunita where she had been between Ram Dulari's death and her birth. The interval was approximately 6 years. Sunita said that she just remained in Majhola.

Recognitions Made by Sunita. I have already mentioned Sunita's recognition—of Ram Dulari's son, Ranvir—when she was first taken to Majhola by Bitto Devi. At that time, or perhaps later, she gave his name, Ranvir. When we talked at Majhola with Ranvir, he denied that Sunita had recognized him, but he was uncommunicative and, as I shall explain later, perhaps wished to discredit Sunita's claim to remember the life of his mother.[9]

When Sunita returned to Majhola with her father and Balram Shastri (about a month after her first visit), she again recognized Ranvir, saying that he was her son. Two of Ranvir's sons came to where she was, and she recognized them. Sunita said of them: "These are my grandsons." In Majhola we neglected to inquire about the details of these recognitions, as also about two other recognitions of Majhola villagers that Jagdish Singh said Sunita had made. These were Jai Kumar, whom Sunita recognized as an "uncle" ("village uncle," that is, a more or less distant relative of her husband, should be understood here), and Mashan Singh, who was recognized as "my brother" (in a similarly loose expression). (In extenuation of this failure I will again mention the extreme coolness of Ranvir Singh toward our inquiries; I return to this topic below.)

For a sixth recognition we did obtain confirmation from the person recognized. According to Jagdish Singh, Sunita said of Lakhan Singh: "He was my *chacha* [father's younger brother]." Lakhan Singh told us that Sunita had recognized him by saying: "He is my uncle." (In fact, Lakhan Singh was a "village uncle" not of Ram Dulari, but of her husband, Lalla Singh; but Ram Dulari almost

[9]It is also possible, as has happened in other cases, that Ranvir did not hear Sunita telling her grandmother who he was. This is perhaps more likely because he was, Bitto Devi said, lounging on a cot when Sunita recognized him. So he might have been half or fully asleep when Sunita spoke.

certainly knew and addressed him as "uncle.") Lakhan Singh also gave a general endorsement of Sunita's other recognitions of Majhola villagers, saying that "she identified all the relatives by their relationship to Ram Dulari." We did not ask him about particulars of individual recognitions other than Sunita's recognition of him.

According to an informant in Fatehpur Ghani (who did not wish her name recorded, perhaps out of fear of Ram Dulari's family in Majhola), Sunita had recognized Ram Dulari's daughter-in-law when she first went to Majhola. This informant said that she had been with Sunita (and presumably her grandmother also) when she first went to Majhola. Sunita became frightened when she saw Ram Dulari's daughter-in-law and said: "She got me cut." I did not confirm this recognition from Bitto Devi, but Bitto Devi did mention a closely similar remark that Sunita made when she saw Ram Dulari's daughter-in-law on what was, I believe, a different visit to Majhola. (I shall mention this in describing Sunita's behavior related to the previous life.)

Lakhan Singh further said that Ranvir had asked Sunita whether she (as Ram Dulari) had buried any money. She said that she had buried some money in one of the fields, but she was unable to show where it was.

Sunita's Behavior Related to the Previous Life

Jagdish Singh said that Sunita did not have a phobia of knives, but her mother said that she was afraid of both knives and darkness.

Sunita had a marked phobia of Ram Dulari's daughter-in-law. In the preceding section I mentioned Sunita's fear of Ram Dulari's daughter-in-law when she first saw her and her remark that this woman had "got me cut." On another occasion, when Bitto Devi went over to Majhola to attend a condolence meeting after the death of a villager there, she took Sunita with her. Sunita at first played contentedly outside the house where Bitto Devi was visiting. But when Ram Dulari's daughter-in-law came there, Sunita went to Bitto Devi, clung tightly to her, and said: "She might kill me again." As I mentioned, the two villages are only about 1 kilometer apart, and Sunita could hardly avoid seeing Ram Dulari's daughter-in-law from time to time. Savitri Devi said that each time Sunita saw this woman she became so distraught that she developed a fever.

For some years Sunita seemed not to object to visiting Majhola and showed only a particular fear of Ram Dulari's daughter-in-law; but after a time she developed a dislike for even going to Majhola, and this dislike had persisted up to 1979, about 5 years after she had seemed to forget the imaged memories of Ram Dulari's murder.

Sunita also showed, when she was still a young child, a marked animosity toward Ranvir Singh. On two occasions, once at Majhola and once at Fatehpur Ghani, when Ranvir offered Sunita money, she threw it away. Her attitude toward him was ambivalent, however, because when he visited Sunita's family in Fatehpur Ghani, she hospitably asked her grandmother to prepare some food for him.

The Attitudes of the Adults Concerned in the Case toward It

Ram Dulari's son, Ranvir, appeared to have a mixed attitude toward Sunita's claim to be his mother reborn. As I mentioned, he had twice offered her money, which she had rejected. He even talked of giving Sunita some land. On the other hand, when we met him, he was singularly uncooperative and gave minimal or evasive replies. At one point he said he thought the case was a hoax, but when we asked him what the motives for this might be, he reversed himself and acknowledged that Sunita must have told her parents something about a previous life.

Ranvir's son, Ramvir, who was present during one of our interviews in Majhola, said that people were saying Sunita would not go to his mother, Ram Dulari's daughter-in-law; but he denied this, saying that Sunita was "quite happy with my mother." This contradicted the testimony of Sunita's family on this point.

For their part Sunita's family were not eager to promote the case. They could easily see that Sunita's memories disturbed her; and her paternal uncle was afraid that Ram Dulari's murderers might come over to Fatehpur Ghani and kill Sunita. Sunita's parents were concerned about Ranvir's offer of money and land to Sunita, and they were afraid the previous family might take her from them. For these different reasons her uncle insisted that Sunita be discouraged from talking about the previous life. Her parents therefore adopted the measure of tapping her on the head every Saturday and Sunday, believing that this would induce amnesia.[10]

Comment. Uneducated villagers from time to time mistake me and my associates for government officials of some kind; explanations and reassurances do not always allay their mistrust. Where there has been a murder in a village, they may fear that an old police case will be reopened. I believe that thoughts along this line explain the efforts of Ranvir and Ramvir to discredit this case.

Sunita's Birthmarks

Sunita had three types of birthmarks. Of these an extensive nevus flammeus (port-wine stain) birthmark was much the most prominent (Figures 6-8, 6-9, and 6-10). It covered almost the entire upper right chest and the medial side of the right arm all the way down to and including three of the fingers of the hand. This mark would blanch with pressure.

[10]In a series of 69 Indian cases 29 (41%) of the parents of the subjects suppressed or tried to suppress their child from speaking about a previous life (Stevenson and Chadha, 1990). The motives for the suppression varied, and they appear, on the whole, to have had no influence on events. The subjects tend to forget the memories between the ages of 5 and 8 (with the usual exceptions) whether or not their parents try to suppress them.

A partial list of subjects whose parents suppressed them includes: Prakash Varshnay, Puti Patra, Bongkuch Promsin, Roberta Morgan, Semir Taci, Jasbir Singh, Ravi Shankar Gupta, the Ven. Chaokhun Rajsuthajarn, Nasruddin Shah, Nirankar Bhatnagar, and Cemil Fahrici. I have given an incomplete list of some of the methods used elsewhere (Stevenson, 1987).

Figure 6-11 This photograph, taken in March 1977, shows the depressed hypopigmented area across the midline of Sunita Singh's upper sternum. The affected area was about 1.5 centimeters by 5 millimeters in area. One of the lines of hypopigmentation can be seen running from about 1 centimeter superior to the depressed area laterally and superiorly, crossing the clavicle.

A second mark was near the upper end of the sternum, across its midline (Figure 6-11). It was a depressed area measuring approximately 1.5 centimeters by 5 millimeters. It was deficient in pigment compared with the surrounding tissue. Sunita's mother and grandmother said that this depressed area had been present when Sunita was born. Her father had not noticed it then, and he raised the question of whether it might have been the consequence of a postnatal furuncle. (However, it did not have the appearance of a furuncle scar.) Its location corresponded closely (but not exactly) with that of injury No. 4 described in the report of the autopsy on Ram Dulari's body.

Sunita also had two long marks running across her right lower neck toward the chest and, in the case of one, onto the upper chest. They were each about 12 to 14 centimeters long and about 2 millimeters wide. They had less pigmentation than the surrounding skin. The lower of these marks, which had a scarlike appearance, can be seen near the midline in Figure 6-11 and more distinctly (as well as for a greater part of its length) in Figure 6-12, which also shows the shadow of the depressed area near the upper end of Sunita's sternum. Bitto Devi said that these two linear marks on Sunita's neck were also birthmarks. The lower one, which is

Figure 6-12 This photograph, also taken in 1977, shows the depressed area near the center of the upper sternum. It also shows, much more clearly than Figure 6-11, the linear, scarlike area running for about 12 centimeters from the upper chest laterally to the right side of the neck.

best seen in Figure 6-12, corresponds in approximate location with injury No. 3 described in the report of the autopsy on Ram Dulari's body.

The upper of these two linear birthmarks on the neck (which has not come out adequately on any of my photographs) may correspond to Injury No. 2 of the postmortem report, if we are willing to suppose some movement of the mark between Sunita's birth and the time we examined her. Unfortunately, we failed to inquire about postnatal shifting of the birthmarks in their positions relative to other anatomical points. I have evidence of such movement of the birthmarks after birth in other cases, such as that of Nasruddin Shah, the report of whose case follows this one; and I discuss the topic in Chapter 11.

We found no birthmark or malformation on Sunita corresponding to Injury No. 1 of the postmortem report. Sunita's mouth and right cheek were normal.

Sunita's birthmarks did not bleed or ooze when she was born. Jagdish Singh said that the birthmarks had faded since her birth. Savitri Devi said that at her

birth Sunita had been "red all over," which suggests that at that time the area of the nevus flammeus was more extensive than it later became.

Sunita had not complained of pain in the areas of the birthmarks.

Comment. The present is one of several cases in which there were more wounds on the murdered person, as noted in the postmortem report, than there were birthmarks on the subject.

I believe that Sunita's extensive nevus flammeus corresponds to the blood on Ram Dulari's body after she was wounded and as she was dying. As I mentioned, adherent blood was not washed off Ram Dulari's body before it was cremated. To readers who think blood a strange kind of stimulus for a birthmark in another body, I offer the reminder that I am concerned in this book with images that affect physical bodies. Although wounds of the skin generate most of the birthmarks figuring in these cases, other kinds of marks may also have this effect. Informants have identified blood adherent to a corpse as a stimulus of birthmarks in four other cases: those of Narong Yensiri (in this chapter), Ma Shwe Yee, Navalkishore Yadav, and Ariya Noikerd (in later chapters.)

Sunita's Later Development

Whether as a result of her family's discouragement and efforts at suppression or for other reasons, Sunita stopped talking about the previous life when she was about 7 years old. I have already mentioned that her phobia of Ram Dulari's daughter-in-law and her dislike of going to Majhola persisted at least until 1979, when she was 12 years old.

Sunita suffered from poor health. In 1975 when she was about 8 years old, she had a serious illness with a high fever and was even thought likely to die. She recovered from this illness, but her father thought that she was afterward less intelligent than she had been. She continued in school, however, and in 1979 had reached the fourth grade. As she was then 12, she was behind her peers. Her parents decided to remove her from school on the grounds that she could not benefit from further attendance.

She seemed to me (in 1979) to be somewhat shorter and less robust than the average village girl of her age in northern India.

Dr. Pasricha and I last met Sunita (and her parents) at Fatehpur Ghani in November 1988. Sunita was then 21 years old. She had married in 1984. She had had no children. Her husband owned some land, but hired or allowed other persons to cultivate it. We did not learn his occupation. Sunita was spending much time with her parents (where we met her), ostensibly for treatment of "fits" that she had been having. From her parents' description of these I could not decide whether the "fits" were epileptic or hysterical. Judgment by a local healer that she was possessed offered no discriminating information for us.

Sunita said that she no longer had a phobia of knives and could use kitchen knives; however, she was still distressed to see dead animals that had been cut up. (There seemed here to be an acknowledgment that Sunita had once been afraid of

knives. Her father, Jagdish Singh, remembered at this time that she had had a phobia of knives when younger, which in the 1970s he had not remembered, although her mother had remembered such a phobia.)

Sunita did have a persistent fear of darkness, and she liked to have a lamp burning in the room where she slept inside the house at her in-laws' house. At her parents' house she was afraid to sleep inside the house unless someone else, such as her mother, was with her in the room.

Comment. Sunita's is one of numerous cases in which what I call behavioral memories, such as phobias, philias, and aversions, persist after imaged memories of a previous life have ceased.

THE CASE OF NASRUDDIN SHAH

Summary of the Case and Its Investigation

Nasruddin Shah was born in the town of Allahaganj, District Shahjahanpur, Uttar Pradesh, India. The best estimate of the date of his birth that I can make is April 1962.[11] His parents were Gulsher Shah and his wife, Bhaggo. Nasruddin was their second son and second child. They subsequently had two other children. Gulsher Shah was a laborer who worked at various, mostly unskilled jobs, according to what was available. He and his wife were Sunni Moslems.

When Nasruddin was born, his mother noticed three birthmarks on his body, of which Figure 6-13 shows the most prominent and most important one, which is located on the lower left side of his chest. I shall describe the birthmarks later.

Nasruddin began to speak when he was about 1 year old, and started to refer to a previous life when he was about 2. His mother said that his first remark about the previous life was: "My money is buried under the door." He said that he was Hardev Baksh Singh, a Thakur. He described a quarrel in his village which had led to his being stabbed with a spear and killed. Nasruddin's parents could not at first make any sense of what he was saying; but the pieces of his narration gradually fitted together. I cannot find in the notes of this case that any informant said Nasruddin had explicitly spoken the name of Hardev Baksh Singh's village. (This

[11]Bhaggo, Nasruddin's mother, gave several different dates and estimates for the month and year of his birth. In May 1975 she thought that he had been born in June 1964. In 1976 Gulsher Shah calculated the year to be 1962; and Bhaggo, who now remembered that the month was April, not June, said she then thought that April 1962 was the correct date. Udai Veer Singh, making calculations of his own (also in 1976) based on his long familiarity with the Shah family and the births of their children, estimated Nasruddin's year of birth as 1963, but he was not dogmatic about this figure. In 1975 he had said that Nasruddin was born about 9 months after the murder of Hardev Baksh Singh, the previous personality of this case. The date of the latter's death (March 21, 1961) is established by the autopsy on his body, which was performed the following day, March 22, 1961. All informants agreed that Nasruddin was born after the murder of Hardev Baksh Singh. The date of April 1962 is probably accurate to within 6 months.

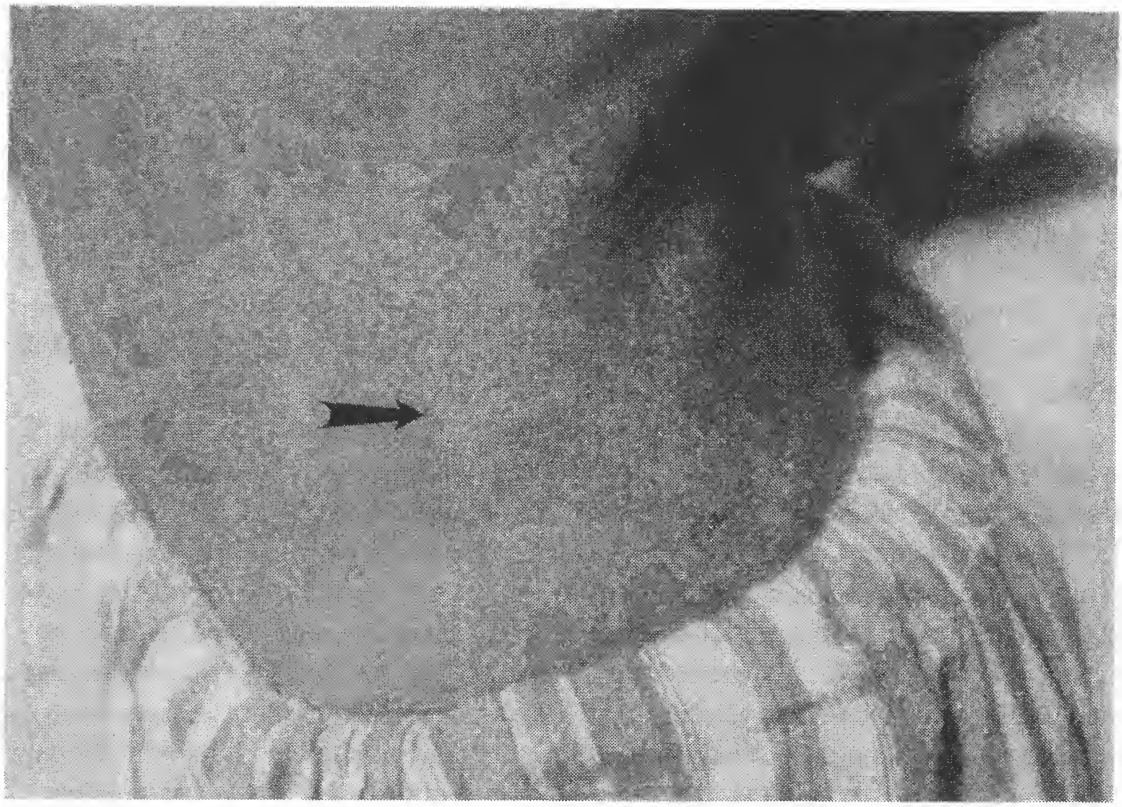

Figure 6-13 Birthmark on Nasruddin Shah in 1975 when he was about 13½. The birthmark was at the costal margin approximately at the level where the eighth and ninth ribs curve upwards and join. It was wrinkled and resembled a healed scar. It was ovoid in shape and approximately 3 centimeters long and 7-8 millimeters at its widest. It had decreased pigmentation compared with the surrounding skin. (There was an apparently irrelevant hyperpigmented nevus lateral and inferior to it.)

was Phargana, a village located about 9.5 kilometers from Allahaganj.) Nasruddin indicated indirectly that the place to which he referred was Phargana, when he recognized an elephant that had come from there and said that it was his. (In fact, this elephant had not belonged to Hardev Baksh Singh, but to one of his distant cousins.) At about the time Nasruddin recognized the elephant from Phargana, and perhaps because he had done so, word of what he was saying reached Phargana. (The most likely carrier of the first news was a woman who came from Phargana; she was the wife of Bhullan, a friend of the Shahs.) Hardev Baksh Singh's wife, one of his sons, and some other villagers of Phargana then came to see Nasruddin in Allahaganj. I cannot say positively that they came unannounced; but given the difficulties of transport and communication in that part of India I am almost certain that they gave no advance information about their impending visit; they just arrived. Nasruddin recognized Hardev Baksh Singh's wife and son, although he could not give their names. The visitors from Phargana wished to take Nasruddin there for a visit, but his parents, who thought he might be kept by Hardev Baksh

Singh's family, would not permit him to go. Nasruddin had never gone to Phargana up to the time of the case's investigation.

Nasruddin's father said that he never asked to go to Phargana, but his mother remembered that at the time visitors from Phargana came to see him he had pressed insistently to go there. Her husband did not recall this. At any rate, his parents feared that he might be kidnapped and taken there, or that he might run away and go there by himself. They therefore tried to suppress his memories, or at least stop him from talking about them. They thought that they had succeeded in this, but Nasruddin did not share this opinion, because he said in 1975 and 1976 that he still remembered the previous life.

Udai Veer Singh, a prominent resident of Allahaganj who assisted us in the study of other cases of his area, first notified colleagues of mine in India (Dr. Jamuna Prasad, Chandra Prakash, and Dr. Satwant Pasricha) about the case in April 1975. A few weeks later (in May 1975) they began investigating it. Dr. Pasricha recorded lengthy statements by Nasruddin, his mother, and Udai Veer Singh, who had both observed Nasruddin and verified the accuracy of some of his statements.

In October 1975, I went (with Dr. Pasricha) to Allahaganj, where we interviewed Nasruddin and his parents again. The rains stayed late that year and made it impossible for us to go to Phargana. We returned a year later, in October 1976, and went to Phargana in a bullock-cart. Phargana is one of the more inaccessible places to which these investigations have taken me, and the difficulty of reaching it and returning from it allowed us time for only a few brief interviews there. In Allahaganj, however, we could again talk with Nasruddin, his parents, and Udai Veer Singh.

In Phargana, Dr. Pasricha and I learned that there had been a postmortem examination on the body of Hardev Baksh Singh at Fatehgarh. We followed this lead, and in October 1977 we found and examined a copy of the relevant autopsy report that was in the files of the District Hospital, Fatehgarh.

In March 1979, Dr. Pasricha and I were again in Allahaganj, where we had another interview with Udai Veer Singh about connections between the people of Allahaganj and those of Phargana. We also met and interviewed (on the same topic) Yograj Singh, who was a native of the village of Behti, near Phargana, and an occasional employer of Gulsher Shah.

In November 1983, Dr. Pasricha returned to the area of the case and conducted follow-up interviews with Nasruddin and his mother. (Gulsher Shah had died in 1980.)

Persons Interviewed during the Investigation

In Allahaganj we interviewed:

Nasruddin Shah
Gulsher Shah, Nasruddin's father
Bhaggo Shah, Nasruddin's mother
Udai Veer Singh, resident of Allahaganj
Yograj Singh, resident of Allahaganj (native of Behti, near Phargana)

In Phargana we interviewed:

Jamuna Baksh Singh, headman of Phargana
Shanker Baksh Singh, Jamuna Baksh Singh's father
Ganga Baksh Singh, Jamuna Baksh Singh's younger brother
Natha Singh, Hardev Baksh Singh's nephew
Hari Har Singh, villager
Ram Lal, villager
Surat Singh, villager

With the exception of Surat Singh, all the Singhs of Phargana with whom we talked were related to Hardev Baksh Singh; but only Natha Singh was closely related to him, the others being his third cousins.

Udai Veer Singh was one of the more substantial landowners of Allahaganj. He was deservedly respected by a wide circle of laborers and peasants, who may be regarded as having been his retainers. Gulsher Shah was obviously in this position in relation to Udai Veer Singh.

Relevant Facts of Geography and Possibilities for Normal Means of Communication between the Two Families

Allahaganj is a market town of about 4,000 inhabitants in the Shahjahanpur District of Uttar Pradesh. It is approximately 100 kilometers southeast of the large city of Bareilly. As its name suggests it might, it contains a substantial minority of Moslems; 60% of the population are Hindus and 40% Moslems.

Phargana is a small village with an estimated population of 200 inhabitants. It is 10 kilometers south of Allahaganj in the neighboring district of Hardoi. A crude road, which at times amounts to little more than some disconnected ruts, joins Allahaganj and Phargana. It is traversable only by pedestrians, bicyclists, elephants, and bullock-carts.

Allahaganj is the market town for villages surrounding it, including Phargana. Residents of Phargana go into Allahaganj about twice a week for shopping. News of important events in Phargana, such as a murder, would certainly be diffused in Allahaganj, although Udai Veer Singh said that only a few persons in Allahaganj would have paid much attention to the murder of Hardev Baksh Singh, who "was not an important person." Udai Veer Singh could not remember whether the persons who had killed him had been arrested and tried for the offense, which shows how little he himself had noticed the crime at the time it occurred.

The inhabitants of Allahaganj would have little occasion for visiting Phargana. Gulsher Shah said that he went there for the first time about 5 or 6 months before Nasruddin's birth. He just passed through it and did not spend the night there. In about 1972-1973 he began going over to Phargana fairly regularly to trade, but he still did not stay there at night. (This was many years after Nasruddin had begun to talk about the previous life.) Gulsher Shah said that he

had heard about Hardev Baksh Singh's family before the case developed, but did not know its members personally.

There were, however, some closer connections between the people of Phargana and Nasruddin's family. The Singhs of Phargana were friendly with Udai Veer Singh, although not related to him.

Yograj Singh was a native of the village of Behti, which is only about 300 meters from Phargana. He and Hardev Baksh Singh were distant cousins. He had lived in Allahaganj since his youth and was a close friend of Udai Veer Singh. He was also an occasional employer of Gulsher Shah and had amicable relations with him. Yograj had been in Behti at the time of Hardev Baksh Singh's murder, and he had gone to Phargana after learning that he had been wounded. However, he said that he was sure that he had never discussed Hardev Baksh Singh's murder with the Shahs or in their presence. He thought that the murder had stimulated little interest in Allahaganj, because Hardev Baksh Singh had no relatives there.

We also found another link between the Shahs and Phargana. They had a (Moslem) neighbor and friend, Bhullan, whose wife came from Phargana. She and her mother used to come over to Gulsher Shah's house when Nasruddin was small in order to help Bhaggo Shah with her work. Bhaggo recalled that Bhullan's wife had mentioned the murder of a Thakur in Phargana to her during her pregnancy with Nasruddin. She then dropped the subject until after Nasruddin began to talk about the previous life, when she (Bhullan's wife) suggested that perhaps Nasruddin was the reincarnation of the Thakur who had been killed in Phargana. As I mentioned earlier, she seems to have been the first resident of Allahaganj to take word about Nasruddin's statements back to Phargana.

Bhullan's wife and mother—only the former was from Phargana, not the latter—began to come over to Gulsher Shah's house and help Bhaggo when Nasruddin was about 2 years old—just the age when he was beginning to talk most about the previous life. This leaves the possibility that Bhullan's wife talked more about Hardev Baksh Singh's murder before Nasruddin did than Bhaggo afterward remembered. Unfortunately, Bhullan's mother had died, and his wife had left him before the time of our investigation; so they were not available to be interviewed. However, even if the Shahs had not had a friend from Phargana, there might have been other persons of the area who could have brought information about Hardev Baksh Singh to the Shahs.

Additional Background Information

Readers will find certain details of this case easier to understand if they remember that Nasruddin and his family were Moslems of the Sunni (orthodox) branch of Islam, who do not normally believe in reincarnation. Moreover, the Shahs were extremely poor—so poor, in fact, that they said they could not afford to send Nasruddin to school. In contrast, Hardev Baksh Singh and his family were Hindus who belonged to the caste of Thakurs. The Thakurs are members of the Kshatriya or warrior caste, second to the Brahmins in rank. As such they are

inclined to assume, and to be accorded, positions of superiority with regard to lower castes in village affairs. Hardev Baksh Singh's family were not wealthy, but they had land and livestock; and so they were immensely better off in material possessions than Nasruddin's family. There were thus wide gaps between the two families concerned: in religion, in social status, and in economic resources.

The Death of Hardev Baksh Singh

Hardev Baksh Singh was an elderly man of between 70 and 75 years when he was killed on March 21, 1961. A dispute between villagers of Phargana erupted over the alleged trespass by Hardev Baksh Singh's cattle on the lands of other villagers. Anger mounted and led to armed conflict within the village. The weapons used included spears of the type shown in Figure 6-14. Relatives found themselves on opposing sides in the battle. When it was over, Hardev Baksh Singh had been killed. Another combatant, Bhagwan Singh, was carried away to a hospital, where he died from his wounds. Nasruddin said that "his" sons were among his (that is, Hardev Baksh Singh's) murderers, and Udai Veer Singh said that he had made private inquiries that confirmed Nasruddin's accusation. I did not tactlessly ask a direct question touching on this matter in Phargana, and no one there volunteered to confirm what Udai Veer Singh had said. The most I learned was that the villagers taking part on the two sides in the skirmish were related as third cousins. Three of my informants in Phargana said that persons from outside the village engaged in the scuffle and were the persons who actually killed Hardev Baksh Singh and Bhagwan Singh. These informants themselves, however, belonged to the family some of whose members were arrested and charged with the deaths of the two men killed. Although the suspects were released, their relatives may have wished, in talking to me, to maintain a blameless record for the accused men by attributing the crime to outsiders.

I pass from these conjectures to the certainty of our knowledge concerning the immediate cause of Hardev Baksh Singh's death.

The Report of the Postmortem on Hardev Baksh Singh. The report of the autopsy conducted at the District Hospital, Fatehgarh, described a puncture wound of the left chest 4.5 inches below the left nipple in the sixth intercostal space. The wound was ¾ inch by 1 inch in extent. The weapon making it had pierced the chest at the level of the sixth intercostal space and had penetrated the left pleura, pericardium, and heart.[12] Death was attributed to hemorrhage from the wound in the heart. The report also described an "abraded contusion ½ inch by ½ inch with a surrounding hematoma two inches in diameter." It was located "three inches above the right ear."

[12]I have not used quotation marks in citing this part of the autopsy report, because I rearranged its phrases to make it more readily intelligible. I preserved the original measurements of the report, given in inches, instead of converting them to units of the metric system.

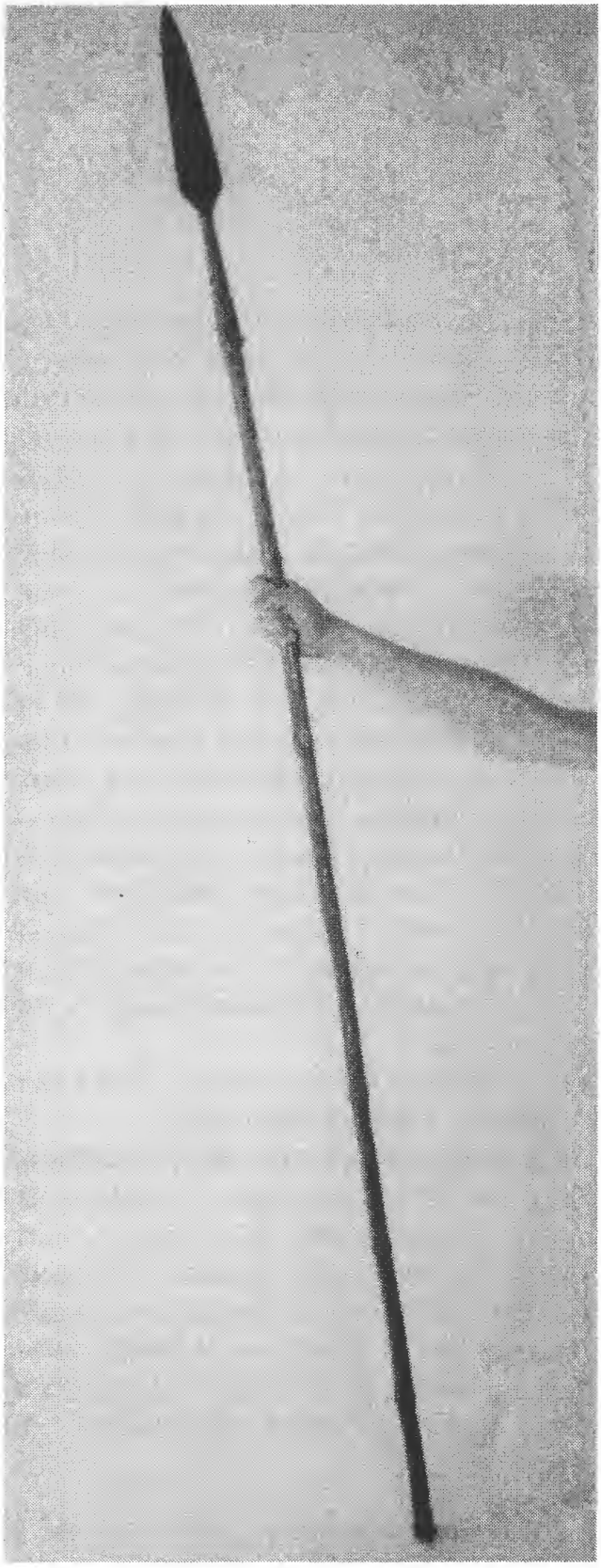

Figure 6-14 Spear of northern India. Purchased in Bareilly, Uttar Pradesh.

Finally, the report mentioned three other superficial wounds, on each arm and the right shoulder.[13]

Statements and Recognitions Made by Nasruddin

In Table 6-3 I have listed the statements Nasruddin made about the previous life according to informants who heard him speak about it.

In 1975, when we first met Nasruddin, he was about 13 years old. It had been many years since he had first spoken about the previous life, which accounts, I think, for his parents' not remembering more of what he had said earlier. Nasruddin himself claimed that he still remembered the previous life with some clarity. He said, however (in a later interview in 1976), that he could no longer remember names, such as those of his (previous) wife and sons. In 1975 Dr. Pasricha recorded 29 of Nasruddin's statements that were additional to the 13 listed in Table 6-3; I did not include them in the table because they were not corroborated. It is possible that we could have obtained corroborations for more of Nasruddin's statements, if we had come to the case sooner than we did. We did not attempt to verify all of his uncorroborated statements of 1975; however, from those that we tried to verify, we could tell that he was accurate about some details, but not about others. For example, he said that Hardev Baksh Singh had had three brothers, which was correct; but he also said that Hardev Baksh Singh was the youngest of the brothers, whereas he was the second oldest. He said that he had had 500 *bighas* (approximately 165 acres) of land (which would have been an unusually large holding for a peasant farmer of Uttar Pradesh), whereas Hardev Baksh Singh had had only 60 bighas. Nasruddin claimed that he had had daughters, but Hardev Baksh Singh had had none. He was more accurate concerning details of the death of Hardev Baksh Singh. He said that he was killed outside his house and near a tree, which was correct. He said that he was killed with a spear and a gun. Hardev Baksh Singh was killed by a spear thrust; I did not learn that a gun had also been used, but one may have been. He said that he had died instantly, which must have been correct for Hardev Baksh Singh, since a spear punctured his heart.

Comment on Nasruddin's Memories of 1975. Visitors from Phargana came to Allahaganj to meet Nasruddin on different occasions when he was between 3 and 6 years of age. Thereafter, there were no further contacts between the two families concerned. (Nasruddin himself had never been to Phargana.) After these visits, no one appears to have thought much about the case outside Nasruddin's family until 1975, when our investigation of it began. Even Udai Veer

[13]Two informants for the wounds on Hardev Baksh Singh made mistakes about the location of his wounds. Ram Lal said that he had seen the body and that its principal wound was on the *right* side. When we asked him whether he was sure of the side, he said: "No." Jamuna Baksh Singh remembered that the wounds were in the lower chest at the midline (area of the xiphoid process) and in the upper back. According to the postmortem report, all these indications were wrong.

Table 6-3 **Summary of Statements Made by Nasruddin**

Item	*Informants*	*Verification*	*Comments*
1. His name was Hardev Baksh Singh.	Gulsher Shah, Nasruddin's father	Hari Har Singh, villager of Phargana	Bhaggo Shah (Nasruddin's mother) said Nasruddin had stated only the given names: "Hardev Baksh."
2. He was from Phargana.	Bhaggo Shah, Nasruddin's mother	Hari Har Singh	I am uncertain whether Nasruddin ever said in so many words that he was from Phargana. His mother said that he had recognized an elephant and its driver who came from Phargana; and this, together with the name and other details he gave, led them to identify his statements with the life of Hardev Baksh of Phargana.
3. He was a Thakur.	Gulsher Shah	Udai Veer Singh, resident of Allahaganj	
4. His father was called "Rao Sahib."	Bhaggo Shah	Udai Veer Singh	"Rao Sahib" is a title assumed by prominent Thakurs. It was adopted by Hardev Baksh Singh's family.
5. His wife was short.	Udai Veer Singh	Unverified	
6. He had sons.	Udai Veer Singh	Hari Har Singh	Hardev Baksh Singh had two sons.
7. He had two daughters who were younger than his sons.	Udai Veer Singh	Incorrect	Hardev Baksh Singh had no daughters.

8. He had a gun.	Bhaggo Shah	Hari Har Singh	The gun was registered in the name of Hardev Baksh Singh's older brother, Gaya.
9. He had a spear.	Bhaggo Shah	Unverified	
10. He had a pitcher buried under his door.	Bhaggo Shah	Unverified	In 1976, Bhaggo Shah remembered Nasruddin saying: "My money is buried under that threshold." Udai Veer Singh was a secondhand verifier of this item. He said that he had verified it from "people who knew Hardev Baksh Singh." Hari Har Singh said this item was incorrect; but he may not have known about secretly buried treasure.
11. There was a quarrel over the cattle.	Surat Singh, villager of Phargana Gulsher Shah	Jamuna Baksh Singh, headman of Phargana Ganga Baksh Singh, villager of Phargana Shanker Baksh Singh, villager of Phargana	Gulsher Shah said that Nasruddin referred to a quarrel, but did not tell him what it was about.
12. He was speared to death.	Gulsher Shah Bhaggo Shah	Ganga Baksh Singh Report of autopsy on Hardev Baksh Singh	When Nasruddin spoke about being speared to death, he pointed to his birthmarks and said that they were the marks of spear wounds. Bhaggo Shah (in 1976) said that Nasruddin had said that he was hit with a lathi, speared in the stomach, and hit with a *kanta* in the left side. (A kanta is a short-handled instrument shaped somewhat like an axe and used for chopping fodder; see Figure 6-15.)

Table 6-3 *(continued)*

Item	*Informants*	*Verification*	*Comments*
			I obtained no evidence that lathis and kantas were used in the brief battle in which Hardev Baksh Singh was killed; but these (as well as spears) are weapons commonly used in village quarrels in India.
13. Members of his own family killed him.	Gulsher Shah Udai Veer Singh	Udai Veer Singh	See text for discussion of who killed Hardev Baksh Singh.

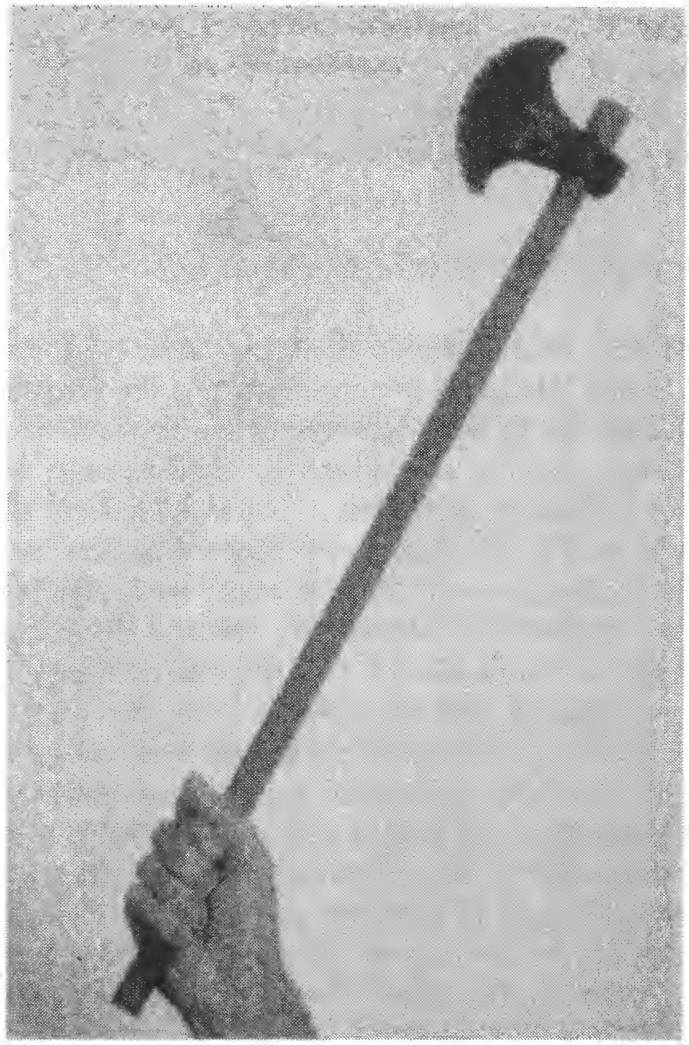

Figure 6-15 Kanta of northern India. This instrument is ordinarily used for chopping fodder.

Singh seems not to have heard anything about the case until about 1972, when Nasruddin was already 10 years old. In many other cases, the attention of the family of the previous personality (and sometimes that of investigators) gives the subject many opportunities to tell repeatedly what he remembers about the previous life and also to learn normally details that were not included in his original imaged memories of that life. Such repetitions do not seem to have occurred in Nasruddin's case. It provides, therefore, a somewhat unusual opportunity to examine the extent to which memories of a previous life may fade with the passage of time when reviews of them stimulated by other persons do not prevent this. It shows also the extent to which false and to some extent mythologizing pseudomemories may come to fill in gaps in the original memories, or embellish them.

Nasruddin's Recognitions. I mentioned earlier Nasruddin's recognition of the elephant from Phargana. He incorrectly said that the elephant was his (meaning Hardev Baksh Singh's), which it was not, although it did come from Hardev Baksh Singh's village and belonged to one of his cousins.

Gulsher Shah said that when Hardev Baksh Singh's wife and son came from Phargana to visit Nasruddin in Allahaganj, he recognized them by stating their relationships to Hardev Baksh Singh, but he could not give their names. I did not learn other details of these recognitions and therefore did not include them in Table 6-3.

Nasruddin's Behavior Related to the Previous Life

Circumstances and Manner of Nasruddin's Speaking about the Previous Life. When Nasruddin saw the elephant from Phargana, he cried. His mother at first thought that he was frightened by the elephant, but subsequently he said that the elephant was his. He apparently cried because he wanted it. His father heard him telling his playmates: "I am a Thakur." Since they were Moslems, this was his way of asserting his superiority over his peers. I did not learn of other special circumstances when he would speak about the previous life.

Nasruddin's Attitude of Superiority toward His Family. Nasruddin showed several habits and attitudes that were unusual in his impoverished Moslem family, but that harmonized with his claim to have been a moderately affluent Thakur in a previous life. He would not eat any food on a plate that someone else had used, nor would he drink water from a glass from which someone else had already drunk. He would not eat beef or fish, as the other members of his family did, but he would eat mutton. He refused to collect cow dung for fuel, a chore accepted as a matter of course by most low-caste and poor Indian village children. He asked for expensive clothes and would not wear any that someone else had already worn. He tended to play alone rather than with other children. His mother said he was stubborn and short-tempered.

Nasruddin became willing to drink water from a glass someone else had used when he was about 4; but he persisted in the other traits that I have just mentioned up to the time of our interviews in 1975 and 1976. He was then willing to pick up cow dung, but did so reluctantly. In other respects his behavior had changed little, or not at all, from that he had shown when he was an infant.

Nasruddin's family accepted his unusual behavior as residues from the previous life of a prosperous Thakur. His older brother, Julaluddin, once succinctly expressed the family acknowledgment of Nasruddin's status. It happened that he and Nasruddin had quarreled one day. They had come to blows, and Nasruddin had beaten his brother rather badly. Udai Veer Singh learned of this and remonstrated with Julaluddin for allowing his younger brother to beat him up. Julaluddin replied: "He is a Thakur. I cannot beat him." This extraordinary remark excited Udai Veer Singh's interest, and he then for the first time learned about the case; Nasruddin was about 10 years old at the time.

Nasruddin's Resistance to the Islamic Religion. Nasruddin manifested a notable resistance to the practice of his parents' religion. He would not say Islamic prayers or go to the mosque. His parents, like devout Moslems, observed the annual month-long fast of Ramadan, but Nasruddin would not join the rest of

the family in this act of devotion. He teased his parents by saying: "What do you get when you remain hungry?"[14]

Other Relevant Behavior of Nasruddin

After the visits by Phargana villagers to Nasruddin, he did not ask to go there.

He never talked about revenging himself on the persons who had killed Hardev Baksh Singh.

He had a marked fear of the dark and would not go out of the house at night even for a "call of nature."

Comment. Nasruddin's phobia of the dark did not derive from the hour at which Hardev Baksh Singh had been killed,[15] which was at 4 p.m. in daylight. I think it possible that Nasruddin, from the memory of having been killed in a previous life, had a general fear that he might be killed again (as he saw his situation). I should expect such a fear to increase at night, when one cannot easily detect potential enemies.

The Attitude of Nasruddin's Parents and Community toward His Memories

Gulsher Shah was well aware that the idea of reincarnation was not taught in his religion, the Sunni branch of Islam. He said that he had not believed in reincarnation until Nasruddin's statements and behavior had changed his mind. By the time of our study of the case, Bhaggo also believed in reincarnation. It appears that the case of her older son, Julaluddin, had impressed her as much as had Nasruddin's. Julaluddin's case has interesting features—such as a birth defect—and I shall refer to it briefly later; but it lacks the abundance of cognitive and behavioral detail that we found in Nasruddin's case.

Although Gulsher and Bhaggo Shah were convinced that Nasruddin was Hardev Baksh Singh reborn, they did not wish him to talk about his memories. This was not because, like many Indian parents, they considered it unlucky for a child to remember a previous life. Instead, they were afraid that Nasruddin might go off to Phargana when he grew up if he still remembered living there. So they took various measures to suppress his memories. They rotated him counterclockwise on a millstone and tapped him on the head. Bhaggo Shah told Dr. Pasricha in 1975 that they had also beaten Nasruddin to make him stop talking about the previous life.

Somewhat inconsistently, Nasruddin's parents also made some effort to accommodate his "Thakur tastes." They went so far as to give up eating beef themselves, since he would not take it. Gulsher and Bhaggo Shah said, almost

[14]Other subjects who have shown resistance to practicing their parents' religion include Wijanama Kithsiri and Gamini Jayasena.

[15]Cevriye Bayrı was a subject in whom a fear of the dark seemed to derive from the murder of the previous personality in the middle of the night.

apologetically, that their poverty prevented them from satisfying Nasruddin's demands for fine food and clothes.

Nasruddin's parents had some concern about the attitude toward the case of some members of their Moslem community in Allahaganj. At the time of the first interviews of my colleagues with Nasruddin and his parents (in May 1975), some Moslems had gathered around the group at the interviews and tried to disrupt the heretical transactions. The interviews were being conducted in one of Udai Veer Singh's compounds, and he quelled the disturbers so that the interviews could be resumed. However, we learned later that members of the Moslem community had afterward been critical—and even menacing—toward Nasruddin's parents for their cooperation with the investigation. Our inquiries continued nevertheless, under the protection of Udai Veer Singh. We did not learn in 1976 of further antagonism on the part of the Moslem community toward Nasruddin's family; but when I proposed that we might go to the area where they lived in order to meet Bhullan's wife (who came from Phargana), we were told that conducting any interviews in or near Gulsher Shah's house would likely ignite trouble with his (Moslem) neighbors. (I suggested this interview before I knew that Bhullan's wife had left him.)

Nasruddin's Birthmarks

Bhaggo Shah said that Nasruddin had three birthmarks. (He was born during the night, and she noticed the birthmarks the following morning.) All three were "very red," but they did not bleed or discharge.

Figure 6-13 shows the most important of the birthmarks as it appeared in 1975, when Nasruddin was 13½ years old. It was ovoid in shape and approximately 3 centimeters long and about 7-8 millimeters at its widest. It had decreased pigmentation compared with the surrounding skin. A definite border defined it, and the skin within its area was slightly wrinkled. Bhaggo said that when Nasruddin was born, the birthmark was markedly superior and also more lateral than it later became as he grew. She described it as having been in his armpit at his birth. She pointed to a location on Nasruddin that was about 10 centimeters superior to where the birthmark was in 1975; however, this does not mean that the birthmark shifted by 10 centimeters measured on the infant body of Nasruddin at birth. Bhaggo was trying to indicate the relationship of the birthmark to neighboring anatomical parts. As Nasruddin grew the birthmark migrated inferiorly and medially. The birthmark's location in 1975 did not correspond closely with the fatal wound in Hardev Baksh Singh, but I think that its location when Nasruddin was born did correspond closely to that of the wound.

Figure 6-13 also shows, inferior to the birthmark to which I am drawing attention, a pigmented nevus, which has, so far as I know, no connection with the previous life in this case.

Bhaggo Shah described a second birthmark which had been on the top of Nasruddin's head. I searched through his hair in the region she indicated, but could find no birthmark there. I did find a hairless area just above Nasruddin's

right ear, but Bhaggo said that it was the scar of a furuncle. I concluded, therefore, that the birthmark Bhaggo said Nasruddin had had on the top of his head at birth had faded by the time I examined him in 1975. Its location, however, would have corresponded rather closely with the wound noted in the report of the autopsy on the body of Hardev Baksh Singh that was described as being 3 inches above his right ear. I referred to it in my summary of the report of the autopsy.

A third birthmark that had persisted and that I examined was in the middle of the lower chest near the xiphoid process. It consisted of a slightly depressed area approximately 1 centimeter by 5 millimeters in area. It does not correspond with any wound described in the autopsy report on Hardev Baksh Singh, and I can offer no explanations for it.

Nasruddin had never complained of pain in the regions of any of the birthmarks.

Comment. In discussing (later in this chapter) the cases of Dellâl Beyaz and Wilfred Meares I suggest that abrasions on the heads of the deceased persons concerned in those cases might have been overlooked or not recorded by the doctors writing medical reports; and this may have happened with a wound on Hardev Baksh Singh's lower chest that the pathologist judged of no causative significance in his death.

Readers should note the detail of the ovoid or lenticular shape of Nasruddin's principal birthmark and compare it with the similar shape of the stab wounds shown in Figures 4-8, 5-8, and 6-16.

Comments on the Evidence of Paranormal Processes in the Case

I have fully exposed all I know about the possibility for Nasruddin to have learned normally some or all of the information he stated about Hardev Baksh Singh. It seems to me unlikely that this is a case of cryptomnesia, and yet it may be—at least with regard to the cognitive elements in Nasruddin's statements. However, even assuming normal transmission of information to him we are left with a formidable problem in trying to account for why a Moslem child would identify so strongly with a Hindu landowner.

No encouragement for such an identification could have come from the Singhs at Phargana. In the area of India where the case occurred, caste distinctions and religious loyalties remain strong, even now, and they were stronger in the 1960s. No Thakur family of the area would welcome the claim of a Moslem child to be one of them reborn. We have seen also that Nasruddin's claims brought nothing pleasant for his family and instead disrupted their relations with other members of the local Moslem community. We could say that Nasruddin himself earned some prestige in the area of Allahaganj as a whole, although not among its Moslem members. No doubt many Indian village children would rather play than collect cow dung for their mothers' fires; but the desire for the affection of parents seems a stronger motive than laziness in most of them. I cannot believe that Nasruddin gained more than he lost if he was only imagining that he had lived the life of Hardev Baksh Singh.

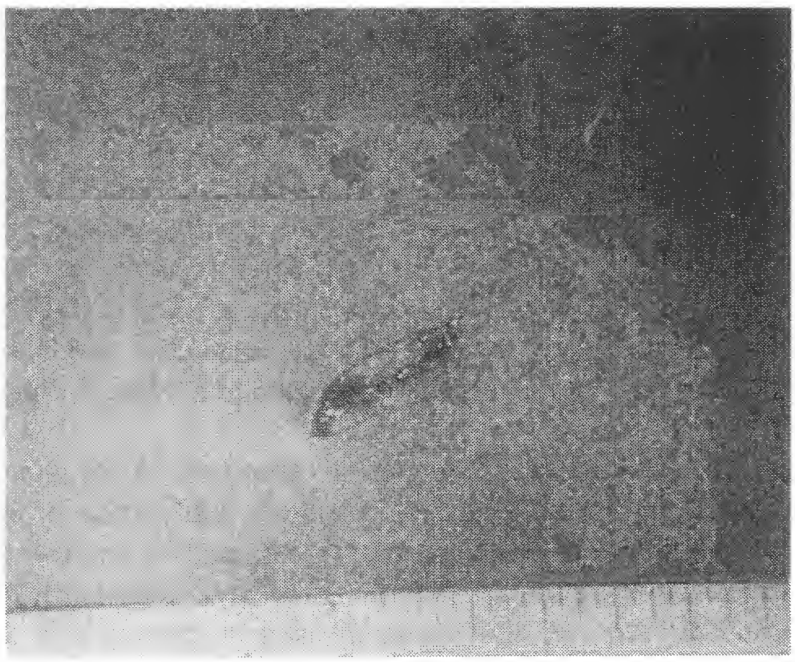

Figure 6-16 Stab wound of the chest that penetrated the heart in a person murdered in Virginia. (Courtesy of Dr. David Wiecking.)

In 1975 Nasruddin's largest birthmark was inferior and a little medial to the location of the fatal wound that penetrated Hardev Baksh Singh's heart and killed him. However, according to Bhaggo's testimony, when Nasruddin was born, the birthmark was closer to the site of the fatal wound on Hardev Baksh Singh; afterward, the correspondence became less close because the birthmark migrated inferiorly and medially as Nasruddin grew. In Chapter 11 I discuss, with additional examples, the movement of birthmarks with the subject's growth.

Nasruddin's Later Development

When Dr. Pasricha met Nasruddin and his mother in November 1983, he was about 21½ years old. His health was good. He had married in December 1981. He was working as a laborer, although not contentedly, because he was still impoverished.

Nasruddin said that his memory of the previous life was fading, and he rarely spoke about it spontaneously. He did this when, unhappy with his life, he would compare it with that in Phargana.

Evidence of the weakening of his memory came from his saying that he was Bhagwan Singh and had been killed by Hardev Baksh Singh. (Bhagwan Singh was the other combatant of the village battle who was killed during it.) Bhaggo Shah said that Nasruddin had formerly mentioned Bhagwan Singh's name, but we had not learned earlier that he had stated this name. And it is certain, from Dr. Pasricha's and my notes of 1975, that Nasruddin had been saying earlier that he had been Hardev Baksh Singh in the previous life he was remembering.

As with many other cases, Nasruddin's behavioral memories outlasted his imaged ones. He still preferred to eat by himself, evidently considering himself superior to the persons among whom his circumstances obliged him to live.

THE CASE OF HENRY DEMMERT III

Summary of the Case and Its Investigation

Henry Demmert III was born in Juneau, Alaska, on October 5, 1968. He was a Tlingit. His parents were Cyrus Robinson and his wife, Carole. They separated soon after his birth, and Henry was adopted by his maternal grandparents, Henry Demmert, Sr. and his wife, Gertrude. They were all the happier to adopt Henry because, on the basis of a dream and a birthmark (Figure 6-17), he had been identified as the reincarnation of Henry Demmert, Jr., who had died in 1957. The latter was the son of Henry Demmert, Sr. by his first wife, Muriel. Henry Demmert, Sr. completed the adoption of the new Henry by officially changing his family name to Demmert; and this also signaled the complete acceptance by his adoptive parents that he was Henry Demmert, Jr. reborn.

Ms. Roxanne Turner first learned of this case in January 1975. At that time she was investigating some other cases for me in Juneau. She recorded a joint statement about the case from Henry Demmert, Sr. and his second wife, Gertrude. Roxanne Turner sent me, with her notes, a sketch of Henry's birthmark. The Demmerts had told her that Henry Demmert, Jr. had been stabbed to death and that Henry's birthmark corresponded in location with the wound from which he had died.

I obtained a copy of the death certificate of Henry Demmert, Jr., but failed in my efforts to obtain a copy of the report of the autopsy on his body.

In May 1977 I was in Alaska and tried to meet Henry Demmert III and his grandfather, Henry Demmert, Sr. The latter was then ill and had gone to Seattle for medical treatment, taking his grandson with him. His wife, Gertrude, had died the year before.

In September 1978 I was more successful. At that time I met both Henry Demmert III and his grandfather. I was able to examine and photograph Henry's birthmark. I learned that he had made only two statements suggestive of imaged memories of a previous life.

The Life and Death of Henry Demmert, Jr.

Henry Demmert, Jr. was born in Juneau on December 6, 1929. His mother must have died when he was still an infant, because Henry Demmert, Sr. told me that he married his second wife, Gertrude, in 1932, when Henry, Jr. would have been less than 3 years old. He was thus effectively raised by his stepmother. (I consider this fact relevant to the announcing dream in the case.)

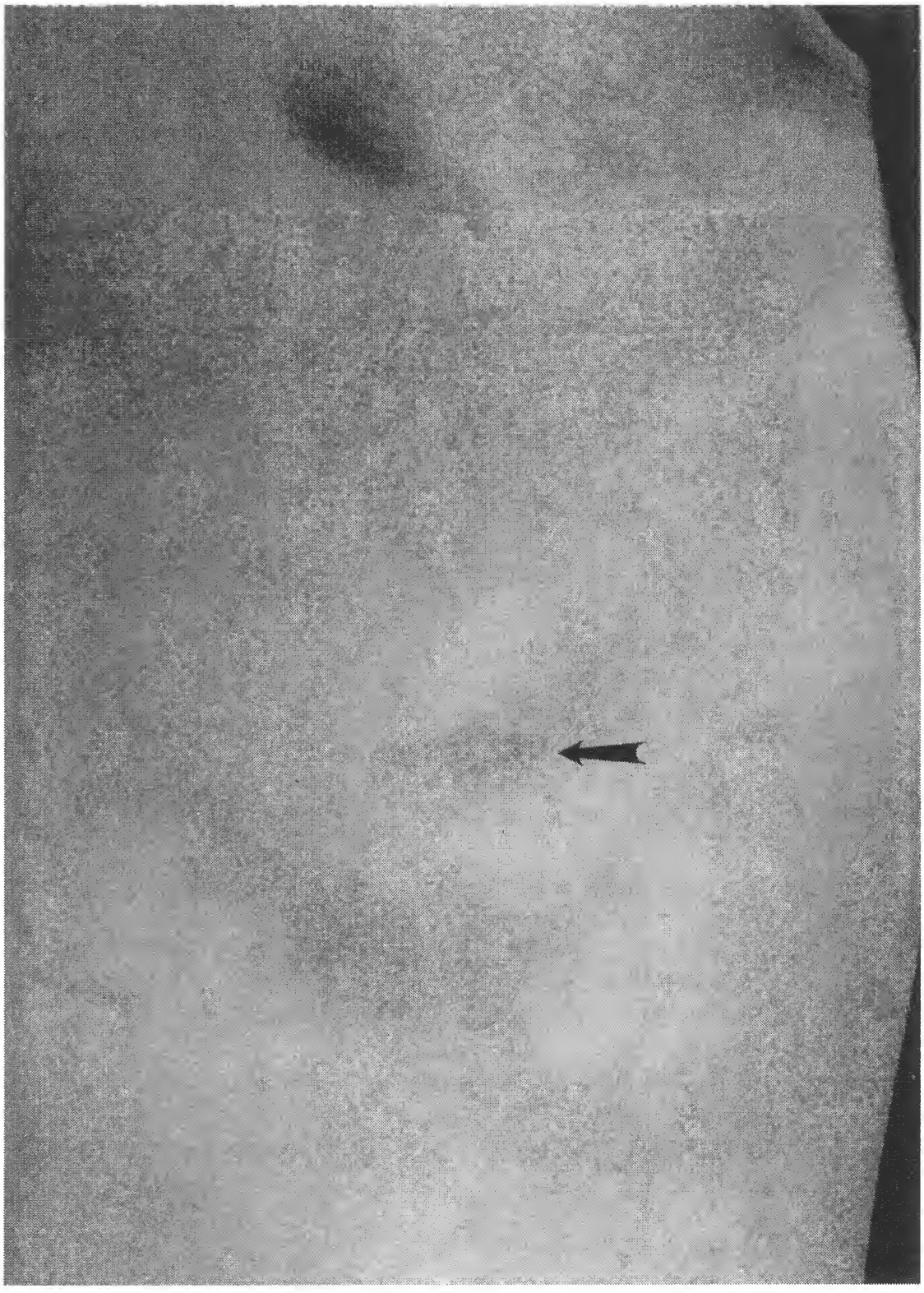

Figure 6-17 Birthmark on the chest of Henry Demmert III. This photograph was taken in 1978, when he was nearly 10 years old. The relevant birthmark was a pigmented macule inferior to the left nipple and slightly lateral. It was rectangular in shape with the medial end slightly narrower than the lateral end. Its greatest dimensions were 3 centimeters in length by 8 millimeters in width.

When Henry grew up, he became a fisherman like his father. At one time he served in the United States Armed Forces, but the dates for this service given on his death certificate are discordant with his age at the time (if his date of birth is correct on the certificate). He married and at the time of his death had two children. He and his family lived in Juneau. He was a heavy drinker of alcohol.

On March 6, 1957, Henry Demmert, Jr. went to a party at a private home where he and others present consumed alcohol abundantly. The party lasted through the night. The next morning at about 5:00 a.m. Henry Demmert, Jr. was stabbed in the heart. He was rushed to the hospital, but he died there at 6:45 a.m. He must, therefore, have lived for less than 2 hours after being stabbed.

Henry's parents regarded his death as a case of murder, and it may have been. The official verdict was different. The police made inquiries, but arrested no suspect. A coroner's jury was impaneled and concluded that death was from an "accidental self-inflicted wound." (I have quoted these words from the copy of the death certificate that I obtained.) It is not difficult to imagine the scene that led to this verdict: two drunken men quarrel, both draw knives, and in the ensuing tangle one is fatally stabbed. The wound received—which I shall shortly describe—was not of a sort likely to be self-inflicted, except in deliberate suicide, which was not here in question. It is possible that the victim's own knife got pushed into his body by the man with whom he was struggling, who can be imagined indulgently as not having intended to kill his adversary. The full autopsy report might have clarified this point, although it could not have led to an arrest if no eyewitness would speak. I have found that inquests about deaths among Tlingits sometimes fail to resolve questions of causation. Juries may prefer turbidity in such matters as the best means of allowing aroused animosities to subside.

A more important point than who wielded the knife that killed Henry Demmert, Jr. was the nature of the wound the knife caused. About this, the death certificate gave some pertinent details. Citing the autopsy report it gave as the primary cause of death: "Laceration of the left lung and heart causing exsanguination." Under the heading of "Major Findings of Operation" (presumably meaning the autopsy), the following words were added: "Knife wound pierced heart."

An Announcing Dream

The case began, not with Henry's birthmark, but with a dream that Gertrude Demmert had "just before" Henry was born. In the dream, Henry, Jr. was looking for his father and stepmother, not, it should be noted, for the new Henry's mother and father. On the basis of this dream, the newborn baby was given the Tlingit name "Shtani," which Henry Demmert, Jr. had had.

Although Gertrude Demmert participated in Roxanne Turner's 1975 interview with her husband, she did not at that time mention her dream to Ms. Turner. Unfortunately, by the time I interviewed Henry Demmert, Sr., Gertrude had died, and so I never had a chance to ask her about the dream, and I do not know why she did not mention it to Ms. Turner. I learned about it from Henry Demmert, Sr.

Statements Made by Henry Demmert III

When Henry Demmert III was about 2 years old, he made the only two statements about the previous life that he ever uttered. (Perhaps I should say instead that these were the only two that his grandfather heard and remembered in 1978.) Pointing to his birthmark he said that he had "got hurt there." He added that this had happened when he "was big." In telling me about these statements Henry Demmert, Sr. was careful to say that his grandson did not say that he had been stabbed at the site of the birthmark.

Other Information about Henry Demmert III

Henry Demmert III did not show some of the other behaviors commonly reported by informants for these cases. For example, he had no phobia of knives. On the contrary, he rather liked to play with them and to carry one with him. My perhaps tactless gift of a small knife to him proved quite acceptable. However, Henry's interest in knives is not paradoxical for the character of his namesake if we take account of all we know about him. If we accept the verdict of the coroner's jury, we cannot avoid concluding that Henry, Jr. carried a knife with him when attending an event billed as a social occasion.

Henry also showed no inclination to drink alcohol at an early age, as have some other subjects of these cases who have remembered the lives of persons who were addicted to alcohol or were heavy consumers of it.

When I met Henry in September 1978, he was a well-developed, 10-year-old boy in good health. He was attending school in the fifth grade. He had no memories of the previous life.

Henry Demmert III's Birthmark

Figure 6-17 shows the birthmark on Henry Demmert III's chest in relation to other anatomical features. (The photograph was taken in 1978.) The birthmark was inferior and slightly lateral to the left nipple. It was located at approximately the level of the sixth rib. It was a hyperpigmented macule approximately 3 centimeters long and 8 millimeters wide. The medial end of the birthmark was slightly more pointed than the lateral end. The birthmark was not elevated. It may have been fractionally depressed below the surrounding skin.

The birthmark was noted soon after Henry's birth. Both Henry Demmert, Sr. and Gertrude Demmert said that it corresponded in location with the fatal wound on Henry Demmert, Jr.

A knife entering the chest at the site of the birthmark, or near it, would penetrate the heart if directed medially and upward.

No other member of the family had a birthmark in this location.

At Henry's birth the birthmark did not bleed or ooze. Henry Demmert, Sr. described it as having then "looked like a scratch mark." Since Henry's birth it

had not changed in relative shape, and it had not shifted in location in relation to other anatomical features. Henry had no pain in the area of the birthmark.

Comment. The suggestion of triangularity in the birthmark may provide an indication that the weapon stabbing Henry Demmert, Jr. had a single cutting edge, like a clasp knife or a kitchen knife, instead of having two cutting edges like a dagger. (Figure 12-14 illustrates these two types of weapons and the different wounds they characteristically make.) However, the birthmark had only an approximately triangular form. In the case of Mehmet Karaytu (reported in Chapter 12) the birthmark had a definitely triangular form; the previous personality in his case was stabbed with a kitchen knife. I will discuss the correspondences between stab wounds and birthmarks in more detail in Chapter 12.

THE CASE OF NARONG YENSIRI

Summary of the Case and Its Investigation

Narong Yensiri was born on October 4, 1976, in Tung Yai village, Amphur Ban Dung, in the Province of Udon Thani, Thailand. His parents were Kanha Yensiri and his wife, Sann. Narong's father was a cultivator. He was his parents' fourth child and second son. They had five children altogether.

Narong's father told me that before Narong's birth his wife had a dream in which her father (who had been stabbed to death in 1974) appeared and said that he would like to come and stay with her. In the dream she told him that he should not do this because they were so poor. (I did not interview Sann Yensiri and can say nothing further about this dream.)

At Narong's birth, he was noticed to have several birthmarks of which the most prominent was in the midline of his chest over the sternum (Figure 6-18). I shall describe these later. From his mother's dream and his birthmarks, Narong must have been identified soon after his birth as being the reincarnation of his maternal grandfather, Pan Srisukit. However, I did not learn when his family reached this conclusion.

Narong began to speak coherently when he was about 2, and when he was under 3 he began to speak about the previous life. His first statement may have been a claim that his maternal grandmother was his wife, but I cannot be certain about this, because I did not interview his mother.

This case and several others in the village of Tung Yai (that were more or less contemporaneous) came to the attention of a newspaper reporter, who sent an account of them to the *Bangkok Times*. That newspaper published the report in its issue of November 11, 1979, and an associate in Bangkok sent me information about the case. In May 1980 Nasib Sirorasa went to the area and made a preliminary investigation of the case. In November 1980, I was able to go to Tung Yai (accompanied by Nasib Sirorasa), and we spent 2 days on the investigation of this case and the others of the village.

Figure 6-18 Birthmarks on the chest of Narong Yensiri as they appeared in November 1980, when he was just 4 years old. The most prominent birthmark was in the midline of the lower sternum. It was an irregularly shaped area of decreased pigmentation. Beside a linear area, there was a larger, triangular area. This birthmark was about 3 centimeters long and about 8 millimeters wide at its widest part. On the left costal margin, about 3-4 centimeters from the midline, another birthmark can be seen. It was generally round and about 1 centimeter in diameter. It had a central area of decreased pigmentation surrounded by a ring of increased pigmentation.
A faint linear area of decreased pigmentation that was about 10 centimeters long can be seen running across the upper chest about 2 centimeters below the inferior edge of the clavicle. This mark may not be a birthmark, because no informant noticed it at birth.
An area of increased pigmentation, about 5 centimeters by 8 centimeters, is visible inferior to the left nipple.

At Ban Dung, the administrative center of the amphur (district), we stopped at the police station and there met a police officer who had participated in the inquiry into the murder of Pan Srisukit. He arranged for the records to be searched, and we obtained a copy of the report of the police inquiry that included a statement about the location of the wounds on the murdered man recorded by the physician who examined his body.

Nasib Sirorasa gave me an oral translation of the main statements of the medical examiner's report before we went on from Ban Dung to Tung Yai. However, she had already located on a sketch the sites of Narong's birthmark over the sternum and of the more extensive birthmark (pigmentary changes) on the left side of his body. (Later, a Thai student of the University of Virginia, J. Laksanaboonsong, translated the entire police report for me.)

Persons Interviewed during the Investigation

In Tung Yai village I interviewed:

Narong Yensiri
Kanha Yensiri, Narong's father
Saa Srisukit, widow of Pan Srisukit
Tongso Changuam, neighbor of the Yensiris

In Ban Dung I interviewed:

Second Lieutenant Watcharin Chaloong (police officer)

Both Nasib Sirorasa (on her first visit to Tung Yai) and I (when we went together) missed meeting Narong's mother.

In addition to the information obtained during our interviews in Tung Yai village, I have used the report of the police inquiry into the death of Pan Srisukit. The police never found his murderers and had little to report about the murder, but the report included a lengthy statement (as the complainant) by Pan Srisukit's wife, Saa.

The Life and Death of Pan Srisukit

Pan Srisukit was born in Ban Namang in the region of Tornalap, Amphur Ban Dung, in about 1920. (Two statements I obtained about his age at death varied widely, and I am not confident that I have chosen the correct one—that given by his widow.) He became a cultivator and also a trader in buffaloes and oxen. When he was about 24, he married a girl called Saa, and they settled in the village of Tung Yai. Tung Yai is 4 kilometers from Ban Namang. They had three daughters and a son. The youngest child, a daughter, was still unmarried at her father's death and living with her parents. Another daughter, Sann, was living elsewhere in Tung Yai with her husband, Kanha Yensiri. (They later became Narong's parents.) The other two children had moved from Tung Yai to other communities.

On the evening of March 28, 1974, two men of about 30 years of age came to visit Pan Srisukit at his house. His wife, Saa, did not know them. She heard them ask him to sell some buffaloes, which he declined to do. Later she served a supper to the three men, but she ate separately from them (with her daughter) and heard nothing of their conversation. After the men had eaten, she heard the strangers ask her husband to take them to another village where they could buy buffaloes. Pan Srisukit then left with the men without saying anything to his wife. She did not think this strange, because he often went out without telling her where he was going or when he would return. She was only mildly troubled when he did not return that night or the next day; but she reported his absence to the village headman. On the following day, March 30, she asked the headman to initiate a search for her husband, but at about this time a man came into the village who said that he had come across the dead body of Pan Srisukit in the Kohmapong forest, which is an unsettled area about 2 kilometers south of Tung Yai.

Saa Srisukit asked her son-in-law (Kanha Yensiri) to go to the site where the body was, which he did. Subsequently she herself went to see her husband's body. The police came and brought with them a doctor who examined the body and wrote a report that described the wounds he observed. By this time the body had been dead 2 days and was decomposing. Saa Srisukit arranged a funeral at the site where it was found, and the body was cremated there.

Pan Srisukit's body had considerable blood on it when it was found, and his family did not wash the blood off before the body was cremated.

The police made no arrests, and the murder remained unsolved. The two men with whom Pan Srisukit had left his house, ostensibly to take them to a place where they could buy buffaloes, were prime suspects, but Pan's wife, Saa, did not know these men before they visited and ate with her husband, and she did not learn their names.

Nor was any motive for the murder clearly discerned, or at least revealed to me. A police escort accompanied me to Tung Yai because the area was known to be somewhat lawless. I was told that the informants would not be frank in the presence of the police officers who were present (or nearby) during our interviews. Kanha Yensiri said that he thought his father-in-law had been stealing buffaloes and that he had been killed on behalf of the man from whom he had stolen the buffaloes. The two strangers who came to call on him were, on this view of the matter, killers hired by the owner of the stolen buffaloes. They lured Pan away from his home on a false pretext and then killed him.

I shall later mention that Narong said that in the previous life he had been drinking alcohol before he was killed. I did not verify this detail, and the police report did not mention it. However, the report was composed almost entirely of the medical examiner's statement and of Saa Srisukit's deposition; and she would not have been likely to mention to the police that her husband had been drinking before he was murdered. Kanha Yensiri said that his father-in-law took alcohol, but was not an excessive drinker. Pan Srisukit also chewed opium.

The Report of the Postmortem on Pan Srisukit. The medical examiner did not perform a complete autopsy. He confined his statement mainly to brief

descriptions of the wounds. I shall now cite relevant portions of the translation of the report by the medical examiner:

> The body was lying on its back, both arms on the chest, the hands clenched.... The body had decomposed. The body was stabbed five times by sharp weapons.
>
> 1. The first wound was at the sternum, triangular in shape, 1.5 centimeters wide.
> 2. The second wound was at the right about 5 centimeters below the nipple, 2 centimeters wide and 3 centimeters long.
> 3. The third wound was at the front of the neck, a laceration 5 centimeters long and 3 centimeters wide.
> 4. The fourth wound was at the right upper abdomen, 6 centimeters from the navel, 2 centimeters wide and 3 centimeters long.
> 5. The fifth wound was at the left rib, 2 centimeters long and 1 centimeter wide. When the body was turned over, no other wound was found.[16] It could be assumed that he was dead not less than 2 days.

Without telling J. Laksanaboonsong the location of the birthmarks on Narong, I discussed the medical examiner's report with him, and together we drew in the location of the wounds on a sketch of the human figure that I use for recording the sites of birthmarks and wounds. The phrase "at the left rib" in item 5 of the extract cited above means, more exactly, "at or near the left costal margin," that is, at the border of the thoracic cage and the abdomen on the left side of the front of the body. (There were no wounds on the back of the body.)

Comment. I think it important to note here that the numbering by a medical examiner of the wounds on the body provides no indication of the order in which the murderers inflicted the wounds on their victim. A murderer would know the order of inflicting wounds and might later remember this if he had not been intoxicated or frenzied when he committed the murder; but murderers are rarely available to give such testimony. Forensic pathologists can often make accurate reconstructions of the sequence of events in a murder; but the physician who examined Pan Srisukit's body made no attempt to do this.

The wound listed as the first one in the medical examiner's report was described as "triangular." This led to conjectures on the part of Second Lieutenant Watcharin Chaloong that the weapon which had caused this wound had been a type of tool having three blades arranged in the form of a three-pointed star that is often used by automobile mechanics. I never learned for exactly what purpose mechanics in Thailand use this tool, but when I went back to Udon Thani, I bought one in a hardware store. It has a sharp point and sharp edges on the three blades, so that it could easily be used as a dagger for murder. If so, it might make

[16]Tongso Changuam said that he had examined Pan Srisukit's body and that it had a wound on the back; but the medical report recorded none. He also said there had been no wound on the abdomen, but the medical report recorded one. Tongso Changuam did correctly remember wounds on the chest and neck.

a somewhat triangular wound. However, so would a single-bladed kitchen knife. (In Chapter 12 I give illustrations of this type of wound in connection with the case of Mehmet Karaytu; see Figures 12-13, 12-14, and 12-15.)

Narong's Statements and Recognitions

Narong's father and grandmother did not remember much of what he said about the previous life. It may be that, compared with other subjects of these cases, he said little. However, as he preferred to talk with his mother, he may have said more about the previous life to her; but we were unable to interview her.

He said that he had been "stabbed dead" and "burned." He said that he had been stabbed in the heart. During my meeting with him in November 1980, Narong, in response to a question about the cause of the stabbing, said: "I was drunk. I was drinking with two persons late at night." He also said that he had been stabbed with a "pointed knife."

Narong said that his grandmother (Saa Srisukit) was his wife. When Saa Srisukit heard him say this, she questioned him about Pan Srisukit's children. Two of his daughters happened to be present, and Narong pointed to them and said they were his daughters. He also said that he had a son living at Nong Weng and a daughter living at Ban Purr. Both these statements were correct for Pan Srisukit.

Narong's father said he had not mentioned the name (or names) of the person (or persons) who killed Pan Srisukit.

I mentioned above that Narong had said that Pan Srisukit had a son, Kann, who lived at Nong Weng. It happened that this son died after Pan Srisukit's death, but in the same year, and therefore before Narong's birth. Narong said (correctly) that Kann had died of "some poisoning." This suggested knowledge on his part of terrestrial events occurring after Pan Srisukit's death and before his birth.

Narong's Behavior Related to the Previous Life

I have little to record under this heading. This may be due to Narong's young age (just 4 years) when I met him, and it may be due to my not having interviewed his mother, who might have observed more unusual behavior than we learned about.

Narong called his mother "Mae," the Thai word for mother. However, he did not address Kanha Yensiri as "Father." Instead, he referred to him obliquely as Sompan's father. Sompan was Narong's older sister, but not his oldest sibling. He had a brother who was older than Sompan.

Narong regarded Saa Srisukit as his wife, and he kissed her as a husband would his wife in a manner different from what would be expected of a child in Thailand.[17]

[17]I consider this behavior to be an expression of precocious sexuality. Other examples of such behavior in young children occurred in the cases of Bongkuch Promsin and Imad Elawar.

Narong had not expressed any ideas of taking revenge on the murderers of Pan Srisukit.

Narong's father thought that Narong resembled his father-in-law in his manner of speaking and in the way he ate. I did not learn details of these resemblances. Both Narong and Pan Srisukit were fearless, according to Kanha Yensiri.

Narong's Birthmarks

Narong's father said that when he was born he had noticed the birthmarks on Narong's chest and on the upper abdomen (at the costal margin) (Figure 6-18). He also noticed a large area of increased pigmentation, mainly on the left back, but to some extent on the front of Narong's body also.

Narong's maternal grandmother, Saa Srisukit, said that she had noticed the birthmark on Narong's chest and also two other birthmarks, one on his forehead and one on the back of his head. These last two, she said, had faded when he was about 3 years old.

When I examined Narong in November 1980, the birthmark at the midline of his chest was clearly visible, as was that over the left ribs near the costal margin. These can be easily seen in Figure 6-18. The first, that over the sternum, is irregular in outline, but its most distinct portion has a somewhat triangular shape. To appreciate this triangular shape, one needs to subtract, so to speak, from the complete birthmark, a straight line that extends across it. With this removed the remainder of the birthmark is triangular. Figure 6-19 shows the triangular shape better than Figure 6-18, because the straight line is less prominent in it. This feature of triangularity accords with the medical examiner's statement that the wound in this area on Pan Srisukit—the first wound mentioned in his report—was triangular in shape. This birthmark was about 3 centimeters long and about 8 millimeters wide at its widest part.

The birthmark at the left costal margin was approximately round in shape and about 1 centimeter in diameter. I think that this birthmark corresponds to the fifth wound mentioned in the medical examiner's report.

I also found a linear mark at the level of the left clavicle. This mark, which was about 10 centimeters long and 0.5 millimeter wide, is faintly visible in Figure 6-18. It may correspond to the third wound mentioned in the medical examiner's report—a laceration 5 centimeters long—that was located on the front of the neck. If so, we should have to suppose that it had shifted in position as Narong grew. (In Chapter 11 I discuss, with other examples, the shifting of birthmarks as a child grows.) However, I cannot be sure that this mark is a birthmark, because my informants did not notice it at Narong's birth.

I found no birthmark whatever that might have corresponded to the second and fourth wounds described in the medical examiner's report.

In addition to the foregoing birthmarks, Narong's trunk, front and back, had extensive, irregular areas of hyperpigmentation. These were mainly on the left side of the body, but the right buttock and upper thigh also had an area of hyper-

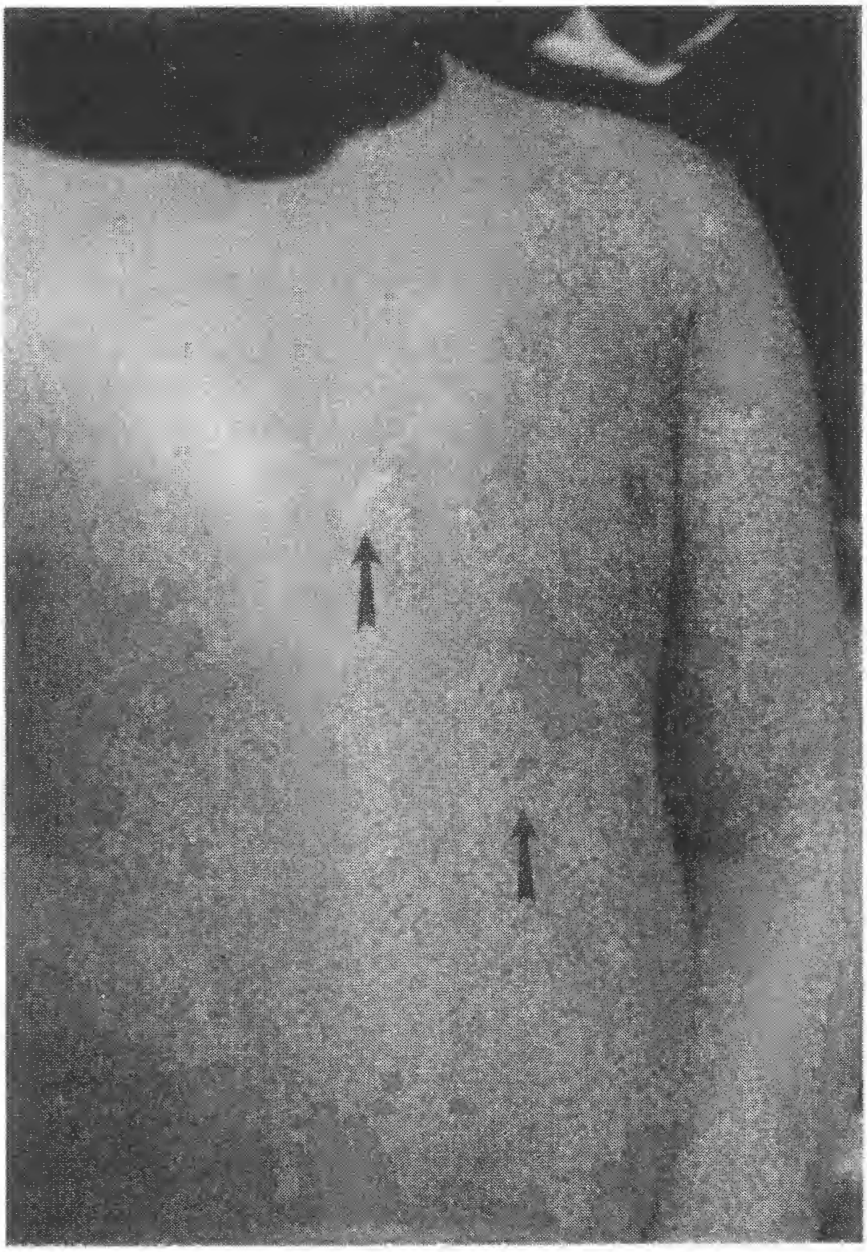

Figure 6-19 This photograph, also taken in November 1980, is included because the triangular shape of the main part of the birthmark at the lower end of the sternum can be more clearly seen in it than in Figure 6-18. The round birthmark at the left costal margin can also be seen in this photograph.

pigmentation. Narong's father described these areas as having been brown-red at his birth. Tongso Changuam said they had been the color of dark blood. When Nasib Sirorasa examined Narong in May 1980, she sketched an area of increased pigmentation extending over most of the left side of the trunk and leg. By the time I examined Narong, 6 months later, the area involved must have diminished, because a sketch I made shows a smaller, but still substantial area of his skin having increased pigmentation. The increased pigmentation was most easily seen on

Figure 6-20 This photograph, also taken in November 1980, shows areas of increased pigmentation on the left back and both buttocks of Narong Yensiri.

Narong's left back and on both his buttocks (Figure 6-20). However, Figure 6-18 also shows an area of increased pigmentation on the front of the left side of the chest below the nipple. As to color, these areas appeared to me to be blackish-brown instead of reddish-brown.

Narong's family believed that these areas of hyperpigmentation corresponded to, and resulted from, blood from the wounds of Pan Srisukit that was not washed off his body before its cremation.

Comment. Readers will have noticed that Narong had only two or, at most, three birthmarks corresponding to wounds described in the medical examiner's report of his examination of Pan Srisukit's body, which listed five wounds on the body. There were therefore two (or perhaps three) more wounds than there were birthmarks. This case, like that of Sunita Singh, belongs to a group of cases in which the reported wounds are more numerous than the apparently corresponding birthmarks. Here I shall only draw attention to this observation, which I shall discuss with other examples in Chapter 14.

Other examples of birthmarks possibly related to blood left on a body at the time of its cremation occurred in the cases of Sunita Singh, Navalkishore Yadav, Ma Shwe Yee, and Ariya Noikerd.

THE CASE OF NECİP ÜNLÜTAŞKIRAN

Summary of the Case and Its Investigation

Necip Ünlütaşkıran was born in 1951[18] (a more exact date is unobtainable) in the Yamaçlı quarter of the Karşıyaka District of the city of Adana, Turkey. His parents were Süleyman Ünlütaşkıran and his wife, Celile. They had five other children besides Necip, but I did not learn Necip's order among them. He was not the oldest child, because I met an older brother, Mehmet Ünlütaşkıran. Süleyman Ünlütaşkıran was a laborer of modest means. He and his family belonged to the lower economic classes; both he and his wife were illiterate.

When Necip was born or soon afterward, he was found to have numerous birthmarks on his head, face, and trunk. Their significance emerged only later.

Necip's parents at first named him Malik, but around the time of his birth Celile Ünlütaşkıran dreamed that a man calling himself Necip said that he had come to her. On the strength of this dream, which I shall describe more fully later, the baby's parents decided to change his name; but because the family already had one child named Necip, they changed the new baby's name to Necati instead.

When the son called Necati became able to speak, he insisted that his name was really Necip. He would not respond when called by another name, and his parents agreed to use it, as I shall also in this report.[19]

Celile Ünlütaşkıran said that Necip developed the power of speech slowly. According to her, he did not begin speaking effectively until he was 4 years old and had not become fluent until he was 5. He spoke later and less (for his age) than her other children.

[18]Necip had an identity card, which gave for him the ludicrous birth year of 1947. His father acknowledged that he had falsified the date in order that his son would finish early his compulsory military service, after which he could obtain a job and contribute economically to the family.

[19]Several other subjects of these cases have refused to respond to any name but that of the previous personality, and their families have capitulated and called them by the demanded name. I listed some other cases of this group in the report of Tali Sowaid's case.

One of Necip's first references to a previous life—but I do not know whether it was his very first—occurred when he was about 6 years old.[20] One day he heard some children shouting during a wedding ceremony that was taking place in his family's neighborhood. He began to say that he himself had children, and he begged his mother to take him to them. She told him that he was too young to have children. Necip insisted nevertheless that he was telling the truth, and thereafter he gradually narrated details of the family he claimed to remember having had in a previous life. He said that he had lived in Mersin (a city about 80 kilometers from Adana). He also described how he had been stabbed and pointed to various parts of his body where he had been stabbed. It was at this time that he insisted on being called Necip, and he refused to respond to other names.

Necip's parents had at first almost no interest in his claims to remember a previous life. His mother later recalled beating him once in an effort to stop him from talking about it. She and her husband made no effort to verify his statements when he was young, and in the end their accuracy was only confirmed more or less by chance, in the following manner.

Celile Ünlütaşkıran's father, Kâmil Mart, was born in Antakya, but when he was 15 he moved to Adana, where Celile was born. In about 1954 he decided to move to a village called Karaduvar, which is near the city of Mersin, and at about the same time he—being then a widower—married again. His new wife, Fatma, was a native of Mersin; they had known each other for only a very short time before they married.

In the summer of 1963, Celile Ünlütaşkıran took Necip with her when she went to Karaduvar to visit her father and stepmother. Neither she nor Necip had ever met Fatma Mart before. When Necip saw Fatma, he recognized her as someone he had known in the previous life he remembered. He said: "You were my 'grandmother' before, but now you are my real grandmother." It turned out that Fatma Mart had lived in the neighborhood of Mersin where a man called Necip Budak had lived and been murdered; and she had been known locally there as "grandmother." Necip then spoke more fully about his memories, the truth of which Fatma Mart acknowledged by kissing him tearfully.

Necip's meeting with Fatma Mart increased his wish to see the family in Mersin that he claimed to remember; and when he learned that his grandfather

[20]Compared with most other subjects of these cases, Necip was not only late in learning to speak, but he was also late in expressing memories of a previous life. The first meeting between the families concerned also occurred when Necip was much older than are the subjects of most cases at the time of similar meetings in their cases.

Suleyman Andary's case also developed when the subject was older than are most subjects. Suleyman did not meet the other family concerned in his case until he was 13. In Suleyman's case, the delay in the meeting was due to his lateness in bringing memories into consciousness. In Necip's case, on the other hand, the delay in the meeting was not of Necip's making or wish. He had been stating details about the previous family (and asking to meet them) for many years before his statements were verified. In his case, the long distance between the two families concerned probably delayed the meeting of the two families, as has happened in other cases in which long distances have separated the families concerned. The case of Salem Andary provides another example of delays in the meeting of the families concerned because of a long distance separating them.

was going to Mersin, he asked to be allowed to accompany him. Kâmil Mart then took Necip to Mersin, where he met and recognized various members of Necip Budak's family under circumstances that I shall describe later. The members of Necip Budak's family verified Necip's main statements as correct for the life and death of Necip Budak.

The story of Necip's claims to remember a previous life and of his visit to Mersin, with the resulting confirmation of his accuracy, reached newspaper reporters. Accounts of the case that appeared in *Yeni Sabah* on August 4, 1963, and in *Akşam* on August 6, 1963, came to the attention of Reşat Bayer, who sent me a translation of these. In November 1963, Reşat Bayer went to Adana and Mersin, where he began the investigation of the case. In March 1964, Reşat Bayer and I went together to south central Turkey, where we continued the study of the case. We interviewed informants belonging to both families concerned in it. In 1966 Reşat Bayer studied the case further without me, and at this time he obtained two valuable pertinent documents: the judges' summation at the trial of Ahmet Renkli for the murder of Necip Budak; and the report of the autopsy on Necip Budak's body, which was made at the Government Hospital in Mersin. In 1967 Reşat Bayer and I again worked on the case together in Adana and Mersin. This concluded our main inquiries for the case, but we had follow-up visits with Necip in 1970 and 1977.

Persons Interviewed during the Investigation

In Adana I interviewed:

Necip Ünlütaşkıran
Süleyman Ünlütaşkıran, Necip's father
Celile Ünlütaşkıran, Necip's mother
Mehmet Ünlütaşkıran, Necip's older brother

In Mersin I interviewed:

Hüsniye Budak, Necip Budak's sister
Abdülkerim Budak, Necip Budak's older brother
Ahmet Budak, Necip Budak's father
Huriye Budak, Necip Budak's mother
Zehra Budak, Necip Budak's widow
Elif Palamut, Zehra Budak's mother and Necip Budak's mother-in-law
Münerer Budak, Necip Budak's son
Abdürrahim Budak, Necip Budak's son
Selma Demirtaş, neighbor of the Budak family
Süleyman Emektaş, neighbor of the Budak family
Mehmet Yetiker, possible eyewitness of Necip Budak's murder

In Karaduvar I interviewed:

Kâmil Mart, Celile Ünlütaşkıran's father and Fatma Mart's husband

In addition to the foregoing interviews, Reşat Bayer interviewed many of the same informants without me. He also interviewed two other informants whom I did not interview. The first of these was Ahmet Renkli, who had murdered Necip Budak. Reşat Bayer recorded a long statement from him in 1963; and when I met him in 1964 and again in 1967, I did not think it necessary to ask him to repeat what he had said earlier. The second of these two informants was Necat Budak, another of Necip Budak's sons.

At the time Reşat Bayer and I went to Karaduvar (in 1964) to interview the Marts, Fatma Mart was ill, but she was able to talk briefly with our Arabic-speaking interpreter. Reşat Bayer had recorded a brief statement from her in 1963.

Zehra Budak had remarried. Her second husband was Hasan Hergeleci, but I refer to her in this report by her first married name.

Süleyman Ünlütaşkıran always showed the greatest amiability during our visits, but he had a poor memory for details. As will be seen in Table 6-4, his wife was our principal informant for what Necip said about the previous life before the two families met.

Up to 1963 Necip had retained many memories of the previous life, and Reşat Bayer recorded a long talk with him that year.

Several informants, most notably Necip's mother, could speak little or no Turkish, and we needed an Arabic interpreter to communicate with them.

Some informants for the case expected some remuneration for their information. Necip Budak's mother, Huriye, showed this venality during the interviews of 1964 and 1966. So did Necip Ünlütaşkıran's mother during the later years of our follow-up interviews in the 1970s; earlier, during the original investigations of the case in the 1960s, she had asked for nothing, although we had usually brought with us some gift for Necip or his family. Finally, in our last interview with Necip (in 1977) he himself asked us for some money, which he had never done before, and we gave him 150 Turkish lira. No other major informant for the case asked for any compensation for his or her testimony.[21]

Relevant Facts of Geography and Possibilities for Normal Means of Communication between the Two Families

Adana is the largest city of south central Turkey and the capital of the province of the same name. In the period with which we are concerned in this report its population was approximately 300,000. Most of the inhabitants were Turkish, but there was a minority of about 25,000 Arabs. These were largely

[21]My general policy is not to pay for information, although I offer compensation to informants who have missed work or incurred expenses in order to meet me or an associate. We usually bring small gifts when returning to an informant for a second interview. I have given monetary gifts to some impoverished informants.

Although I have interviewed thousands of informants during the investigation of these cases, I think fewer than 20 have openly asked for some compensation.

Arabic-speaking (although most of the younger men also spoke Turkish), and they were all, or nearly all, members of the Shiite sect of Alevis.

Mersin is an important port on the Mediterranean coast of Turkey. It is located about 80 kilometers southwest of Adana and had a population of about 75,000 inhabitants. Buses and trains connect the two cities, and there was a considerable amount of traffic between them during the period when this case developed.

Karaduvar, where Kâmil and Fatma Mart lived when Necip first recognized Fatma Mart, is a village about 8 kilometers from Mersin. Although Karaduvar was rural in its appearance and immediate surroundings, I could see from it the edge of the urban factories of Mersin.

The members of both families concerned in this case said that they had not known each other before Necip's first visit to Mersin in 1963. Although Celile had dreamed (at about the time of Necip's birth) that a man calling himself Necip had said he was coming to her, and although her son had later insisted that he should be called Necip and had said that he had had that name in the previous life, none of this information made any sense to Necip's parents before the summer of 1963. They said later that they had never heard of Necip Budak's murder before Necip spoke about it.

Necip Budak's widow, Zehra, and his brother, Abdülkerim, said that they had never known the Ünlütaşkıran family before Necip's first visit to Mersin in 1963.

Fatma Mart provided the only possible means of prior communication between the families that I could discover. She knew the main facts in the life of Necip Budak, and it is necessary to examine her connection with Celile Ünlütaşkıran's family closely. It seems almost certain that Fatma Mart did not know and marry Kâmil Mart until 1954. This was what Kâmil Mart himself said, although his daughter, Celile Ünlütaşkıran, placed her father's marriage earlier, in about 1952. Kâmil and Fatma were, nevertheless, married before Necip began to speak much about the previous life around the age of 6; but Necip never met Fatma until the day, in the summer of 1963, when his mother first took him to visit her father at Karaduvar. If he *had* met her before, the report of her surprise and joy at his recognizing her in that year becomes pointless. The date of this meeting is of some importance, and although I am usually skeptical about the accuracy of reports of cases published in newspapers, I think they can often be trusted with regard to the dating of major developments in a case, such as the first meeting between the two families concerned. Such meetings sometimes provide a local sensation, especially if the subject of the case narrates details of a bloody murder; and newspapers are likely to print accounts of the case soon afterward, as they did in this instance. The dating in the newspapers of the first meeting between the two families—as having taken place in the early summer of 1963—confirmed what my informants said about the time of this meeting.

It may be thought that Fatma Mart could have conveyed information about Necip Budak to Celile, who would then have somehow passed it on to Necip. However, Celile also had never met Fatma before the summer of 1963. I do not

know where Kâmil and Fatma Mart met, but it was almost certainly either at Karaduvar or Mersin and not at Adana. Fatma Mart said that she and her husband had just met, and had perhaps known each other only a few days or even less, when they married. Our Arabic-Turkish interpreter, Zekeriya Kılıç (himself an Alevi), said that among the Alevis it may happen that a man will ask a woman to marry him within a few days, or even on the same day, of meeting her. These details are relevant to eliminating Fatma Mart as a communicator of information normally to Necip or his mother, Celile.

Some readers may find it puzzling—almost incredible—that Celile Ünlütaşkıran had never between 1954 and 1963 gone to Karaduvar to meet her stepmother. But knowing the poverty of her family and the considerable distance between Adana and Mersin, I do not find this surprising.

Kâmil Mart could not have been an intermediary of information about Necip Budak passed normally to Necip. As I mentioned, he lived most of his adult years in Adana, from which he had moved to Karaduvar. He had himself never lived in Mersin, and he said that he had never heard of Necip Budak's murder until Necip Ünlütaşkıran's statements were verified.

The Life, Death, and Character of Necip Budak

About the life of Necip Budak I learned little apart from the details of how he died. He was born in about 1921. He was married to Zehra Palamut, by whom he had three sons and a daughter. Zehra was pregnant at the time of Necip's death and afterward delivered a baby daughter.

On May 6, 1951, Necip, being drunk, picked a quarrel with another man, Ahmet Renkli, whom he saw on the street. It appears that the two men had some acquaintance and had earlier quarreled in a manner that had embittered them toward each other. With the courage of intoxication, Necip Budak followed Ahmet Renkli down the street while he shouted obscene insults at him that everyone could hear. Ahmet Renkli tried to shake him off, but Necip Budak continued to follow and taunt him. Eventually Ahmet Renkli became exasperated and, at the door of his own house, did not enter, but turned back to deal in some way with Necip Budak. It is impossible to say exactly what happened after that, because Ahmet Renkli, at his subsequent trial, advanced the conventional plea of self-defense and claimed that Necip Budak had had a knife with which he had first attacked Ahmet Renkli. Ahmet Renkli then retaliated by attacking Necip Budak with a knife that he had.

In his 1963 statement to Reşat Bayer, Ahmet Renkli said:

> He [Necip Budak]...followed me repeating insults. I turned and shouted: "Go away." He said: "What can you do if I do not go away?"
>
> I had in my pocket a small knife. I opened it and stabbed him in the mouth and on his eyebrow. He grasped my shoulders, and then I gave several strokes [of the knife] under his shoulders. His arms dropped. Then I gave a

> last stroke to the stomach and tore it. I gave 17 or 18 strokes. He fell down. I did not strike at the back of his head.[22]

Necip Budak was carried away to a hospital and died there the following day, May 7th. (I shall give an account of the postmortem report on Necip Budak in the section on Necip Ünlütaşkıran's birthmarks.)

Although I subsequently interviewed a man, Mehmet Yetiker, who claimed to have been an eyewitness of the murder (and may have been), no eyewitness testified at Ahmet Renkli's trial. The judges of the trial court discredited the implausible and incoherent account that Ahmet Renkli gave about his being first attacked by Necip Budak. They judged him guilty of culpable homicide, but acknowledged the mitigation of the insults with which Necip Budak had provoked him. Accordingly, they sentenced him to 12 years of imprisonment. He served 9 years before being released during a general amnesty in Turkey. At the time of Necip Budak's death, Ahmet Renkli had been a shoemaker, but he changed occupations and was working as a grocer when we met him in the 1960s.

We have seen that in his deposition to Reşat Bayer in 1963, Ahmet Renkli no longer claimed, as he had at his trial, that Necip Budak had first attacked him with a knife. He still insisted, however, that Necip Budak had drunkenly insulted him, could not be shaken off, followed him, and finally stimulated a murderous rage in Ahmet Renkli. This accords with other information I obtained about Necip Budak. He appears to have been a heavy drinker and a quarrelsome person frequently in trouble with the law. Even his wife acknowledged that he bore more responsibility for his death than did his murderer. She perhaps had good reason to know, because he had once stabbed her during a quarrel. (This episode later contributed an important detail in the evidence of the case; see item 15, Table 6-4.)

Two Announcing Dreams

In 1964 Celile Ünlütaşkıran described a dream that she said she had before Necip was born. She also described briefly a second dream that she said she had 3 days after Necip's birth. In 1967 she described these dreams again and seemed then to remember some more details of the second dream. The dreams were as follows.

Three days before Necip's birth she dreamed that a man had come to her house and seated himself in a chair. She asked him what he wanted, and he replied: "I am going to stay with you." She then said: "Why do that? My husband will be coming back, and he won't be pleased." She then wrestled with him verbally to get him to leave, but he insisted, adding; "I am from Mersin, and I am

[22]Nevertheless, Necip Budak was found (at the subsequent autopsy) to have a wound at the back of his head. Although Necip Budak might have injured his head when he fell, perhaps hitting it on the pavement, the length of the wound described—7 centimeters—makes me think that Ahmet Renkli had somehow cut Necip Budak on the head and did not notice this during his excitement, or did not afterward remember inflicting this wound.

going to remain with you." He then told her in the dream that he had been killed with a knife during a quarrel. After Necip became able to talk, he gave her a similar account of how he had been killed in the previous life.

Celile had the second dream 3 days after Necip's birth. In this dream the newborn baby seemed to speak to her and said that he was called Necip. He showed her his wounds and said that he had been wounded in the back.

She had no similar dreams at the times of the births of her other children.

Statements and Recognitions Made by Necip

In Table 6-4 I have listed the statements and recognitions that the main informants attributed to Necip. He made the statements of items 1-10 before he first met Fatma Mart at Karaduvar and, at nearly the same time, met Necip Budak's family in Mersin. There Necip recognized a considerable number of persons known to Necip Budak and two objects with which he had been familiar. He also made two additional statements (items 15 and 18) that I have listed among the recognitions.

Necip made other statements that I have not felt justified in listing in the table. For example, Celile Ünlütaşkıran said that he had originally mentioned the names of Necip Budak's children, but she no longer remembered what names he had stated. Necip also gave his mother a circumstantial account of Necip Budak's murder containing more details than I have listed. In what he told his mother, Necip represented Necip Budak as having known Ahmet Renkli rather well. He said that he (as Necip Budak) had intervened in a quarrel between Ahmet Renkli and his (Ahmet's) father and had given Ahmet Renkli a blow. From this Ahmet Renkli nourished a grudge that culminated in his killing Necip Budak. However, he allowed Necip Budak to think that they had become friends again, and Necip Budak went to Ahmet's house in a spirit of reconciliation. Necip Ünlütaşkıran's account to his mother completely omitted Ahmet Renkli's details about how Necip Budak had followed him along the street shouting obscenities at him. Zehra Budak said that Necip Ünlütaşkıran had also talked with her about the fatal quarrel, and Necip's account to her tallied well with what Ahmet Rankli had told Reşat Bayer in 1963 about events leading up to the murder. It thus appears that Necip Ünlütaşkıran had two accounts of these events: one that he told his mother and one that he told Zehra Budak. But Ahmet Renkli also had two accounts: one that he told at his trial and one that he told (after release from prison) in 1963. I think that I have already shown the reasons for the differences between what Ahmet Renkli said at his trial and what he said many years later when he had paid his penalty. The difference between Necip Ünlütaşkıran's two statements may be similarly understood by remembering his different audiences. To his own family he may have wished to whiten the character of Necip Budak and make his murder seem unprovoked, at least by anything Necip Budak did just before it happened. On the other hand, he could have known or sensed that Zehra Budak knew her husband's character well, and he probably allowed himself to be candid with her. If we discredit Ahmet Renkli as a verifier for exactly what happened between him and Necip Budak, we have no way of knowing which of Necip Ünlütaşkıran's accounts

Table 6-4 **Summary of Statements and Recognitions Made by Necip**

Item	*Informants*	*Verification*	*Comments*
1. He was called Necip.	Celile Ünlütaşkıran, Necip's mother	Zehra Budak, Necip Budak's wife	No informant said that Necip had also given the name "Budak."
2. He was from Mersin.	Süleyman Ünlütaşkıran, Necip's father	Zehra Budak	
3. He had a wife and children.	Celile Ünlütaşkıran Süleyman Ünlütaşkıran Mehmet Ünlütaşkıran, Necip's older brother	Zehra Budak	Necip and Zehra Budak had three sons and a daughter at the time of Necip's death. Zehra was pregnant with a daughter born later.
4. His wife was called Zehra.	Celile Ünlütaşkıran	Zehra Budak	
5. His father was called Mahmut.	Celile Ünlütaşkıran	Incorrect	Necip Budak's father was Ahmet Budak. Süleyman Ünlütaşkıran recalled that Necip had said he had a father in Mersin, but he did not state whether Necip gave his name.
6. His mother was called Huriye.	Celile Ünlütaşkıran	Huriye Budak, Necip Budak's mother	Süleyman Ünlütaşkıran recalled that Necip had said he had a mother in Mersin, but he did not state whether Necip gave her name.
7. His mother was fat.	Celile Ünlütaşkıran	Verified by me when I met Huriye Budak in 1964	Necip made this remark as he compared his mother, who he said was thin, with the previous one, who he said was fat. Huriye Budak was much overweight, whereas Celile Ünlütaşkıran was rather slender.

8. He was murdered in Mersin at Aptal, Sepetei Mahalle [District].	Celile Ünlütaşkıran	Transcript of the trial of Ahmet Renkli Partly incorrect	*Mahalle* is the Turkish word for a district or quarter of a town. Presumably Aptal was the name of a street in this district. Necip Budak was killed in Mersin, but probaly not in the Sepetei Mahalle. The transcript of the trial did not state the locality in Mersin of the murder. It occurred near the house of Ahmet Renkli, however, and therefore almost certainly in the Bahçe District of Mersin, where Necip Budak also lived.
9. He had drunk a good deal of rakı.	Celile Ünlütaşkıran	Ahmet Renkli, murderer of Necip Budak	Ahmet Renkli stated in 1963 that Necip Budak had been "very drunk." He did not make a similar statement at his trial, probably because it would have been incompatible with his claim that he killed Necip Budak in self-defense.
10. The murderer stabbed him with a knife.	Celile Ünlütaşkıran Süleyman Ünlütaşkıran	Transcript of the trial of Ahmet Renkli	Süleyman Ünlütaşkıran in his statement about this item mentioned the stabbing, but not the murderer's weapon.
11. He fell into a gutter.	Celile Ünlütaşkıran Süleyman Ünlütaşkıran	Unverified	After being stabbed Necip Budak fell down, but I did not verify that he had fallen into a gutter. Since he was stabbed on the street, it is certainly possible that he did fall into a gutter.
12. It rained very heavily on the day of his funeral.	Necat Budak, son of Necip Budak	Zehra Budak	Item told to Reşat Bayer in 1963. I was not able to interview this informant on my visits to Mersin.

Table 6-4 *(continued)*

Item	*Informants*	*Verification*	*Comments*
13. Recognition of Fatma Mart	Fatma Mart, Celile Ünlütaşkıran's stepmother Kâmil Mart, Celile Ünlütaşkıran's father		When Necip saw his stepgrandmother for the first time, he said: "You were my 'grandmother' before, but now you are my real grandmother." Fatma Mart had lived in the same quarter of Mersin as the Budaks and was known familiarly in the quarter as "grandmother."
14. Recognition of Necip Budak's wife, Zehra	Zehra Budak Selma Demirtaş, neighbor of Zehra Budak		Zehra Budak came to where Necip was in a group of people. She was herself with a group of other women. She made a point of not looking at Necip and saying nothing. He saw her, recognized her, and ran and embraced her. He said "My wife," but did not give her name. Zehra was wearing a veil at the time of this recognition.
15. He gave his wife a cut on the leg with a knife.	Zehra Budak	Zehra Budak	Zehra Budak asked Necip how he could be her husband. Necip said that he had once cut his wife on the leg during a quarrel. A woman of our party in 1964 examined Zehra Budak and found that she still had a scar on her thigh. It was about 2.5 centimeters long.
16. Recognition of mirror that had belonged to Necip Budak	Zehra Budak		The family had moved since the death of Necip Budak. The furnishings were generally changed, but the family had kept this mirror and put it in the new house.

17.	Recognition of Necip Budak's daughter, Yasemin	Selma Demirtaş	When Necip was sitting in the courtyard, he spotted Yasemin on the roof of a nearby house. They seemed to recognize each other. She came down off the roof and ran to him. They embraced and she said: "Who are you?" He said: "I am your father." No informant said that he stated Yasemin's name.
18.	He had a son called Necat.	Zehra Budak	Zehra Budak	After Necip had recognized Zehra Budak and some of Necip Budak's children (for which latter recognitions I lack information), he asked: "Where is Necat?"
19.	Recognition of Necat Budak	Abdürrahim Budak, son of Necip Budak Zehra Budak	According to Abdürrahim, Necip recognized Necat on the occasion when he first came to Mersin and recognized other members of the Budak family. Necat, he said, came to the group with some friends. Necip saw him, ran to him, and called him, "My son, Necat." However, if events occurred in this order, as I think they did, Zehra Budak was not aware that Necip had recognized Necat earlier. Zehra Budak said she took Necip Ünlütaşkıran to the tailor's shop where Necat Budak was working. Necip ran to him and embraced him. I think this meeting occurred after the first occasion described above and so should not count as an initial recognition.

Table 6-4 *(continued)*

Item	*Informants*	*Verification*	*Comments*
20. Recognition of Necip Budak's brother Abdülkerim	Abdülkerim Budak, brother of Necip Budak		Abdülkerim Budak was at the home of a sister when Necip arrived and recognized him immediately. He asked Necip: "Do you recognize me?" Necip replied: "Yes, you are my brother."
21. Recognition of Elif Palamut	Elif Palamut, mother-in-law of Necip Budak Zehra Budak		Elif Palamut was at her daughter's house. Necip was asked if he saw "his" mother-in-law. He looked around the group and indicated Elif Palamut. According to Zehra Budak, Necip recognized Elif Palamut by embracing her, but did not give her name. The recognition has little value because of the possibility, indeed the likelihood, of cueing glances toward Elif Palamut after Necip was asked whether he saw "his" mother-in-law.
22. Recognition of Huriye Budak	Huriye Budak Kâmil Mart Necip Ünlütaşkıran		Huriye Budak said Necip recognized her in the same room as the one in which he recognized Ahmet Budak and Hüsniye Budak. (See items 23 and 25 below.) Necip said discrepantly that he had recognized "his" mother in the street near the house of Necip Budak's sister. He said he kissed her hand and told her he was her son. I believe Necip Ünlütaşkıran may have thus met Necip Budak's mother in the street first, in which

23. Recognition of Ahmet Budak	Ahmet Budak, father of Necip Budak Necip Ünlütaşkıran	Ahmet Budak went to see Necip at his daughter's house. There were some 50 people assembled. Ahmet opened the door and entered quietly. Before anyone had said anything, Necip ran toward Ahmet and embraced him saying: "You are my father." Necip said discrepantly that he had recognized "his" father in the street. He may have been referring to another occasion of seeing Ahmet Budak in Mersin. (See comment for item 22.)
24. Recognition of Necip Budak's son, Abdürrahim	Abdürrahim Budak Zehra Budak	Abdürrahim was at first skeptical about the possibility of his father being reborn. He went to a group around Necip and silently joined it, saying nothing. Necip spotted him and ran and embraced him. Necip did not give Abdürrahim's name. Zehra Budak described another occasion on which she took Necip to a football game in which Abdürrahim was playing. Necip saw him and ran to him on the field. This would not be evidence of a paranormal recognition, but of a strong attachment of Necip for another boy, a virtual stranger to him.

Table 6-4 *(continued)*

Item	*Informants*	*Verification*	*Comments*
25. Recognition of Necip Budak's sister, Hüsniye	Hüsniye Budak, sister of Necip Budak Necip Ünlütaşkıran		Hüsniye Budak went to a room where Necip was sitting. Necip recognized her by saying: "You are my older sister," and embraced her. She was sure no one had suggested her name to Necip. Necip's account of this recognition was somewhat different in that he said that "his" sister had been doing her washing when he went to the house. Here again he may have been referring to another meeting with Hüsniye Budak.
26. Recognition of a red rosary that had belonged to Necip Budak	Zehra Budak		After Necip Budak's death his father had taken his rosary as a memento of his son. When Necip Ünlütaşkıran saw Necip Budak's father playing with the rosary in his hands, he spontaneously said that it belonged to him. No one had asked him about the rosary. In 1963 Reşat Bayer was told about this incident, and Ahmet Budak showed him a yellow rosary that he said had belonged to his son. Necip Ünlütaşkıran insisted, however, that the rosary in question was red, and it is possible that Necip Budak's father was wrong on this detail and had confused two rosaries. A rosary is not, however, an unusual item in Turkey, where nearly every man seems to possess one.

of the precipitating quarrel to believe. Both may have contained elements of truth, but I have not listed any of these additional details about the quarrel in Table 6-4.

I obtained deficient information about the location of most of the recognitions attributed to Necip. However, I can be adequately certain about several. Necip recognized Fatma Mart when he met her for the first time at Karaduvar (item 13, Table 6-4). He recognized Necip Budak's wife, Zehra, and two of his children, Yasemin and Necat, on the occasion of his first visit to Mersin. I am unable to say where the other recognitions that I have listed took place. They occurred in Mersin either on the occasion of Necip's first visit there or on one of the early subsequent visits he made there.

Cues may have vitiated the value of one of Necip's recognitions (item 21). Also, Necip himself discrepantly described different locations or circumstances for three recognitions, those of items 22, 23, and 25. Although I do not ordinarily list the subject as an informant for statements or recognitions, I have included Necip's name as an informant for these recognitions in order to bring out the discrepancies. However, even if we discount the four mentioned recognitions, others remain that appear to have occurred spontaneously or to have been accompanied by some additional accurate statement. Necip's knowledge of the scar on Zehra Budak's thigh particularly impressed me (item 15).

Necip's Statements about an Intermediate Life. Three informants said that Necip had mentioned having an intermediate life between the death of Necip Budak and his own birth. One of these, Necip's mother, said he had referred to two such intermediate lives, both brief. The other two informants for this feature were Kâmil Mart and Zehra Budak. All three informants mentioned that Necip had referred to a brief life (or lives) as infants. However, Necip himself denied in 1963 that he had ever had such a life. As the matter is not germane to Necip's claims to remember the life of Necip Budak, I will not enter into further details here.

Necip's Behavior Related to the Previous Life

Circumstances and Manner of Necip's Speaking about the Previous Life. Necip's mother said that when he talked about the previous life, he sometimes, but not always, used the present tense; in 1964 he was still using the present tense some of the time when he referred to the previous life.[23]

[23]Many subjects of these cases use the present tense when they refer, at a young age, to the persons and objects related to the previous life they seem to remember. In many instances, this usage appears to derive from the child's having a sense that the past life is somehow not past, but still present. Such a child may seem baffled—even outraged—when he learns that a child known to the person whose life he remembers has grown up, or that an adult known to him has died. In other instances, a child's usage of the present tense may derive from his inability to communicate in words the various temporal locations of events that he really knows occurred at different times. The cases of Bongkuch Promsin, Hanumant Saxena, Bhopal Singh, Sanjeev Sharma, and Süleyman Çapar provide other examples of subjects who used the present tense in talking about the previous life remembered.

As he described how he had been killed in the previous life, he would point in the direction of his birthmarks to indicate where he had been wounded.

Necip's Attitude toward Necip Budak's Family. Necip frequently importuned his family to take him or let him go alone to Mersin. He would threaten to go there when he was angry with his mother. In March 1964 he told me that he had twice visited Mersin on his own without letting his parents know for fear that they would refuse him permission. He smiled as he described these visits and contemplated with pleasure the possibility that he might move to Mersin permanently.

Necip showed a particular fondness for "his" son Necat and "his" wife Zehra on his visits to Mersin. Zehra Budak reported that Necip was manifestly jealous of her second husband and wanted to tear up a photograph of him. A heated discussion on the second marriage of Zehra developed between her and Necip.[24] Once when someone suggested that when Necip grew up he would perhaps take the same wife, Necip blushed and looked down with embarrassment.[25]

In 1967 Necip was visiting Mersin just as frequently as he had been 3 years earlier, so his interest in Zehra and Necip Budak's children had not diminished.

Sometimes Necip assumed a paternal role in the Budak family. When Necip Budak's younger daughter, Münevver (still unborn when he died), announced her intention to marry a man from Adana, Necip intervened and warned her against marrying this man. He claimed to have information about the man's family that showed his unsuitability for marrying Münevver.

Other Behavior of Necip Related to the Previous Life. Necip's mother said that he showed a marked fear of knives and also of blood. Necip's father corroborated his wife's statement about Necip's fear of blood, which, he said, was greater than that of his other children.

Necip's fear of knives must largely have abated by 1964 at which time he was employed in a barbershop, not a place where people with phobias of knives are likely to work. The barber who employed him said that Necip had shown no fear of knives or scissors that he had observed. Nevertheless, Necip himself said in 1967 that he still had a definite fear of knives, and of blood also.

Necip's mother said that he would caution his father against drinking rakı. This accords with the rather frank statements Necip himself made about the behavior of Necip Budak. He said that he had been a notorious drunkard and quarreler. In his words: "Everyone was afraid of me." In the present life, he said he found rakı repulsive, and he intended to be a teetotaler all his life.

Necip also shrank from quarrels instead of seeking them.

[24]Some other subjects have shown intense jealousy when another person married the previous personality's spouse. Examples occurred in the cases of Dorabeth Crosby, Edward Taylor, and Semih Tutuşmuş.

[25]Maung Aye Kyaw (whose case I describe in Chapter 4) remembered the life of Maung Shwe, who had been married to Daw Hla Myine. When Maung Aye Kyaw grew up, he married Daw Hla Myine.

Figure 6-21 Birthmarks of the left parietal area of Necip Ünlütaşkıran's head as they appeared in October 1967, when he was about 16 years old. Both were areas of alopecia. A smaller area can be seen (less clearly) superior to the larger hairless area.

The Attitudes of Necip Budak's Family toward Necip

During the period of our observation of the case, the Budak family cordially welcomed Necip when he visited them. Zehra Budak believed that Necip was her husband reborn. She seemed to relish the attention and affection that flowed to her from the attractive teenaged Necip; and indeed her reciprocating affection for him exceeded what one would expect of a middle-aged woman in her relations with an unrelated youth. This was certainly the view of Zehra's second husband; he found Necip's visits to their home vexatious, and he would scold Zehra about them after Necip had left.

Necip's Birthmarks

Necip's mother said that he was born with seven birthmarks, which she enumerated for notes that I made in 1964. (This was before Reşat Bayer and I had studied the report of the autopsy on the body of Necip Budak.) In 1964 I also examined Necip, who pointed out what he thought were his most important visible birthmarks, and I made notes of their location. (Reşat Bayer had earlier examined Necip by himself in 1963.) Some of the birthmarks his mother had described had faded, but three were still distinct, and two other possible birthmarks were faintly discernible. Figure 6-21 shows the most obvious of the birthmarks, one

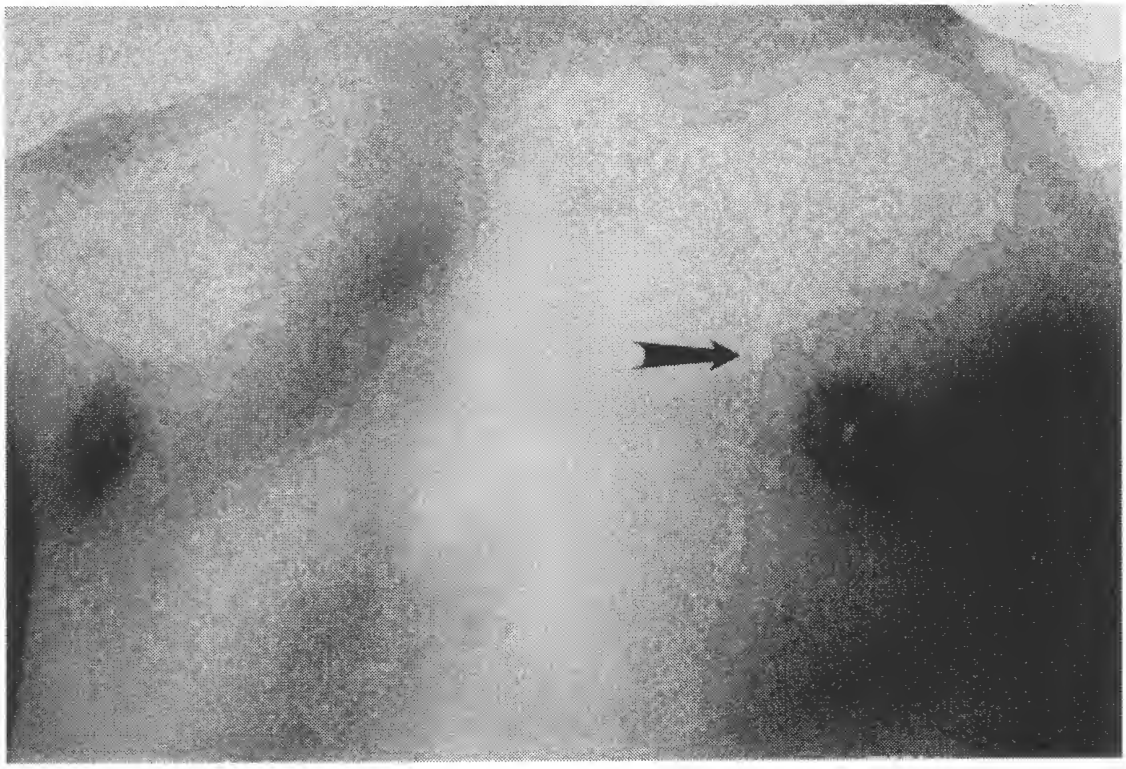

Figure 6-22 Birthmark about 1 centimeter medial and 1 centimeter superior to the left nipple. It was hypopigmented and slightly depressed from the surrounding skin (although the photograph makes it seem elevated). It was ovoid in shape and about 5 millimeters in diameter. This photograph was also taken in October 1967. This mark was not noticed at Necip's birth.

large and one small area of alopecia in the left parietal region of the head. The areas affected were deeper in color than surrounding areas of the scalp. Figures 6-22, 6-23, and 6-24 show three other marks that I believe were birthmarks, although Necip's mother only mentioned one of them, that shown in Figure 6-23.

In 1967, after Reşat Bayer and I had studied the autopsy report, we examined Necip again, and I made further notes (and this time also a sketch) of the location and appearance of Necip's birthmarks. In that year we also obtained photographs of the more prominent birthmarks. My observations in 1967 were more thorough than those I had made in 1964. This was not only because I had studied the autopsy report in the meantime; I had also come to realize the importance of documenting the location and appearance of a birthmark with sketches and photographs. However, at this time I had still not learned to take satisfactory photographs myself, and the ones for Necip's birthmarks—taken by a professional photographer in Adana—are not of high quality.

In Table 6-5 I have summarized the correspondences between birthmarks or possible birthmarks and the wounds noted in the autopsy report. In it I have listed: a) the birthmarks mentioned by Celile Ünlütaşkıran in 1964; b) Necip's statements in 1964 about where the murderer had stabbed Necip Budak; c) the marks

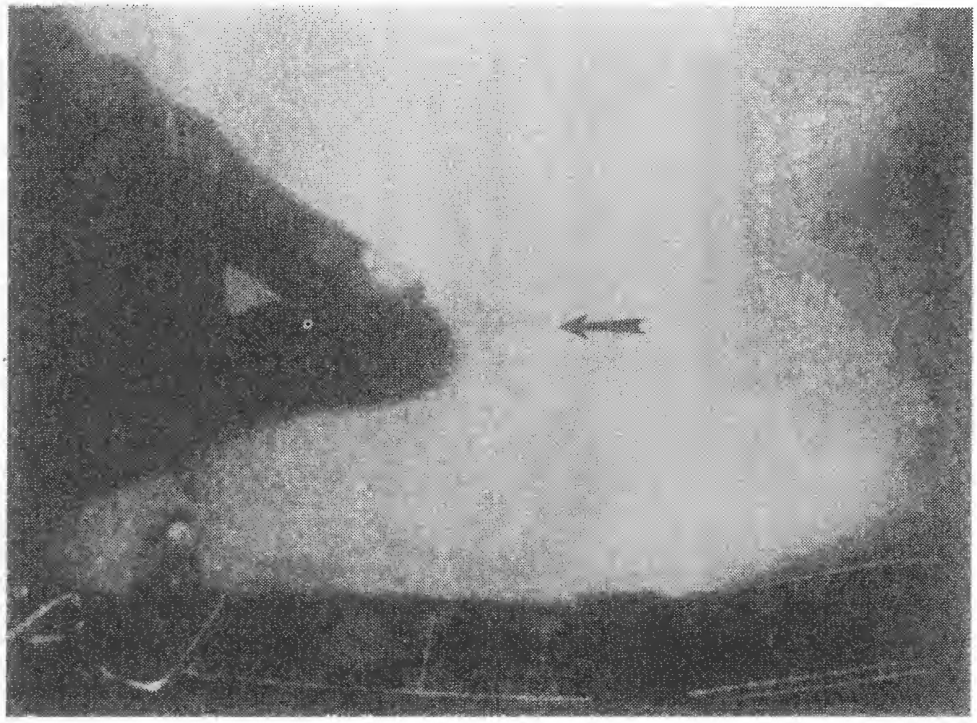

Figure 6-23 A hyperpigmented macule can be seen faintly in the left upper quadrant of the abdomen. The finger points at it. It is over the stomach and spleen. This photograph was also taken in October 1967. The ovoid macule measured about 2 centimeters by 1 centimeter.

Figure 6-24 Circular mark in the middle of left back, laterally and near the posterior axillary line. It was a depressed, slightly scarred area of hyperpigmentation about 2.5 centimeters in diameter. This photograph was also taken in October 1967. This mark was not noticed at Necip's birth.

Table 6-5 **Correspondences between Birthmarks on Necip and Wounds on Necip Budak**

Celile Ünlütaşkıran's Statements in 1964 about the Location of Marks Noted at Necip's Birth	*Necip's 1964 Statements*	*Observations by I.S. and R.B. in 1963-1964*	*Further Observations by I.S. in 1967*	*Details from Report of Autopsy on Necip Budak*
1, 2. Top and back of the head	Top and side of the head	Two hairless areas on the upper part of the head posteriorly. One was 3 centimeters long, the other about 2 centimeters long. The larger was in the left parietal area.	See Figure 6-21, which shows the larger birthmark prominently and the smaller one visible above it.	Skin wound, 7 centimeters long in the left parietal region. Only one long wound mentioned.
3. Right eyebrow	Face	R.B. said in 1963 that he had noted the appearance of an old mark at this location. In 1964 I could see nothing abnormal.		Wound of the right eyebrow, 4 centimeters long.
4. Right lip margins	Face	Nothing visible to me in 1964		Wound of the right upper lip, 2 centimeters long.
5. Face (location not further specified)	Face	Nothing visible to me in 1964		Wound of the right nasal area near the lip, 2 centimeters long.
6. Not mentioned by Celile Ünlütaşkıran	Chest	Prominent birthmark above the left nipple. The mark was depressed below the surrounding skin.	See Figure 6-22. The birthmark can be seen about 1 centimeter superior and medial to the left nipple.	Penetrating wound between the 4th and 5th left ribs on the mammary line, 2 centimeters long.

7. Left abdomen		Some faint marks still visible on upper abdomen	In 1967 I identified a pigmented nevus in the left upper quadrant of the abdomen. This nevus was slightly elevated compared with the surrounding skin. It was more or less round and about 1 centimeter in diameter. This birthmark is faintly visible in Figure 6-23.	Penetrating abdominal wound in the region of the spleen, 5 centimeters long. The spleen had been perforated at its lower end and the small intestine cut. Part of the small intestine had extruded from the wound.
8. Right ear	Face	Nothing visible		No corresponding wound noted on the autopsy report.
9. Not mentioned by Celile Ünlütaşkıran	Chest	Area not examined	A mark was visible on the left side of the back of the chest near the posterior margin of the axillary line in the area of the 10th rib. It was generally round in shape and about 2.5 centimeters in diameter. See Figure 6-24.	A wound 5 centimeters long in the axillary line between the 6th and 7th ribs. It had punctured the lung. The report did not mention in what part of the axillary line this wound was located or on which side of the body it was.
10. Not mentioned by Celile Ünlütaşkıran		Area not examined	Nothing visible	Seven wounds each 5 centimeters long penetrating to the muscles, on the upper left arm near the elbow.

Table 6-5 *(continued)*

Celile Ünlütaşkıran's Statements in 1964 about the Location of Marks Noted at Necip's Birth	*Necip's 1964 Statements*	*Observations by I.S. and R.B. in 1963-1964*	*Further Observations by I.S. in 1967*	*Details from Report of Autopsy on Necip Budak*
11. Not mentioned by Celile Ünlütaşkıran		Area not examined	Two small possible birth-marks at the upper surface of the right shoulder.	No corresponding wound noted in autopsy report.

that Reşat Bayer and I observed on Necip in 1963 and 1964; d) some notes of further observations I made in 1967; and e) the wounds of the same or neighboring locations noted in the report of the autopsy on Necip Budak.

As Table 6-5 shows, we could only definitely see three of the seven birthmarks mentioned by Celile Ünlütaşkıran: two on the head and one on the left upper abdomen. The autopsy report described wounds corresponding to these three birthmarks and to three others (on the eyebrow, the face, and the lips) that she had mentioned, but which we could not see. The autopsy report did not mention a wound on the ear that she mentioned. On the other hand, it did mention two wounds on the front and side (or back) of the chest that corresponded to some extent, although not exactly, to the location of two marks that may be birthmarks. One of these was above the left nipple (Figure 6-22) and the other near the posterior axillary line at the left of the back (Figure 6-24).

In 1967 I thought I saw two small possible birthmarks at the top of Necip's right shoulder; but the autopsy report mentioned no wounds that might have corresponded with these.

Finally, the autopsy report mentioned seven wounds on the upper left arm; on Necip's left arm we could discern no birthmarks corresponding to these wounds, and Celile Ünlütaşkıran had not mentioned noticing any birthmarks there.

Ahmet Renkli told Reşat Bayer (in 1963) that he had stabbed at Necip Budak "17 or 18 times." According to him, the last wound he made was in the abdomen, where one was noted in the autopsy report.

The birthmarks were not all in locations exactly similar to those of the reported wounds. The largest discrepancy occurred with regard to the birthmark superior and medial to the left nipple. It was not in the mammary line, which, above the left nipple, would run superiorly and laterally from the nipple toward the left axilla. Also, the birthmark—as I take it to be—on the left chest at the back was not in the axillary line, but medial to it, although near. Such differences may be due to shifting of the relative positions of the birthmarks after birth. (I describe an example of such shifting in the report of Nasruddin Shah's case, and I have observed it in other cases; see Chapter 11.) Süleyman Ünlütaşkıran said that Necip's birthmarks had changed position since his birth. Unfortunately, I did not ask him to show me how they had moved.

Celile Ünlütaşkıran said that when Necip was born the larger of the two birthmarks on his head was an open sore that did not heal for about a year.

Celile Ünlütaşkıran had not seen the report on the autopsy of Necip Budak, and we had not seen it ourselves when she described to us the location of the birthmarks she had noted on Necip. We cannot exclude the possibility that she learned something from Zehra Budak about the wounds on Necip Budak before she spoke with us about the birthmarks on her Necip. I am cautious in accepting statements about birthmarks that have completely faded by the time I reach the case; but in this one I think it reasonable to record Celile's statements about the faded birthmarks on Necip. Also, we should perhaps take account of only the birthmarks Celile certified as present at Necip's birth. Other marks noted later

may be birthmarks, but they could have resulted from postnatal lesions. I hope to have given enough information so that readers can make their own judgments about what marks to include in their appraisals of the case.

In Table 6-6 I have provided a summary of the birthmarks and possible birthmarks according to my understanding of their times of observation and correspondences with the wounds on Necip Budak.

Comment. Necip made his statements about where the murderer had stabbed Necip Budak in the course of showing Reşat Bayer and me the birthmarks that were still visible. He, also, had not seen the report of the autopsy on Necip Budak, but he may have discussed the location of Necip Budak's wounds with Zehra Budak or other members of the Budak family.

The most prominent birthmarks on Necip were those at the top and back of his head. Wounds there figured in his memories of how Necip Budak died. These, however, were not the wounds that killed Necip Budak. It is possible that the wounds on Necip Budak's head achieved prominence in Necip's mind and in corresponding birthmarks precisely because they were *not* fatal to Necip Budak. If he received the head wounds first and afterward those of the chest and abdomen that killed him, they (the head wounds) would have been longer in his mind before he lost consciousness.

Comments on the Evidence of Paranormal Processes in the Case

I am confident that the two families concerned in this case did not know each other before the case developed. Apart from their denials of such acquaintance, their poverty and the long distance between the towns where they lived make it extremely unlikely that they were acquainted with each other earlier. If I am correct in this judgment, then we can also say that Celile Ünlütaşkıran had no knowledge of the location of the wounds on Necip Budak which she might have used in producing corresponding birthmarks on her son. The case therefore belongs in the group for which we can firmly exclude the interpretation of a maternal impression.

Necip's Later Development

As I mentioned earlier, both of Necip's parents were illiterate, and they were exceedingly poor. The family had little with which to support a child in school, and not surprisingly Necip left school—illiterate—after 2 years of attendance. When I first met him in 1964, he was working as an assistant to a barber. In 1967 he was working in a factory. In his later teens he had the 2 years of military service customary for all young men in Turkey.

In 1970 we met him 3 months after he had returned from military service. He was then transporting goods in a cart. He was still visiting the Budak family in Mersin and had been there twice in the previous 3 months. He remarked to us that Zehra Budak was still living with her second husband.

Table 6-6 **Summary of Correspondences between Birthmarks or Possible Birthmarks on Necip and Wounds Noted in Autopsy Report on Necip Budak**

Birthmarks noted at birth, but faded at age 13, not corresponding to any wound noted in the autopsy report	1	
Wounds on left arm noted in autopsy report but not corresponding to any birthmarks noted at birth	7	
Birthmarks observed at birth, still visible at age 13, and corresponding to wounds noted in autopsy report	3	
Birthmarks observed at birth, but faded at age 13, corresponding to wounds noted in autopsy report	3	
Total birthmarks observed at birth corresponding to wounds noted in autopsy report		6
Marks that may be birthmarks, but that were not noted at birth, corresponding to wounds noted in autopsy report		2
Total possible correspondences between birthmarks and wounds noted in autopsy report		8

In 1977 we found Necip—then about 26 years old—in unhappy circumstances. He was in prison to which he had been sentenced for killing his brother-in-law. This man, Necip told us, had been making improper advances to another of his sisters, and Necip and one of his brothers thought it necessary "to save the honor of the family" by killing him.

THE CASE OF HANUMANT SAXENA

Summary of the Case and Its Investigation

Hanumant Saxena was born in 1955 (probably in the month of August) in the village of Kuinya Khera, District Farrukhabad, Uttar Pradesh, India. His parents were Faujdar Saxena and his wife, Gainda Wati. Faujdar Saxena was a landless villager of extremely modest means. Hanumant was his oldest child; subsequently, another son and a daughter were born in the family.

Gainda Wati Saxena had a dream before she conceived Hanumant. In it, a man called Maha Ram Singh appeared to her. Maha Ram had been shot dead just a few weeks earlier. His assailant had shot him in the lower part of the chest at close range. When Hanumant was born, his parents noted a prominent birthmark

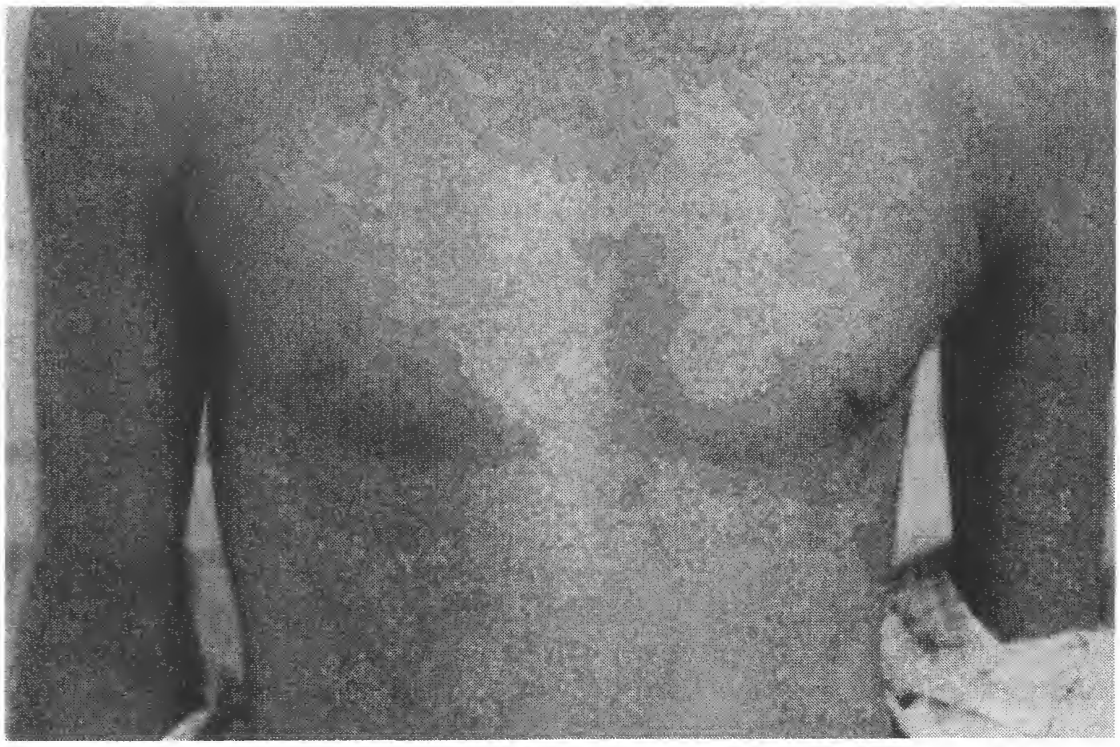

Figure 6-25 Birthmark on Hanumant Saxena's chest as it appeared in 1971, when he was 16 years old. The birthmark was an area of lessened pigmentation.

(or group of birthmarks) on the lower part of his chest near the midline (Figure 6-25). Gainda Wati Saxena's dream and Hanumant's birthmark thus prepared his parents to believe that Hanumant was Maha Ram reborn.

Hanumant began to speak coherently when he was about a year old. He started behaving and talking as if he remembered the life of Maha Ram when he was about 3 years old. He said he was Maha Ram and, pointing to the birthmark on his chest, said that he had been shot there. He made a few other statements that were correct for Maha Ram, and he recognized some people and objects connected with him. He liked to visit Maha Ram's house and also to be with Maha Ram's mother, who lived there.

Hanumant, unlike many subjects of these cases, never seems to have become intensely involved with the memories he had of a previous life. His mother said that he talked about the previous life until he was between 5 and 6 years of age, but his father said that he continued to visit Maha Ram's house up to the age of 10.

I first learned of the case in the summer of 1964. At that time, I penetrated into the interior of the state of Uttar Pradesh far from my base at the large city of Kanpur. I was then mainly investigating other cases already known to me; but informants told me about some others—of which this was one—and I noted down a few details about it. Although I hoped some day to return to the case, other cases seemed more accessible, and I allowed it to recede from my attention. The case

was then rediscovered, so to speak, by Dr. L. P. Mehrotra (in April 1971) when he was near Kuinya Khera, also investigating other cases. He sent me notes about the case, and this stimulated me to put it on a list of cases to be investigated in the autumn of 1971. Accordingly, Dr. Mehrotra and I began to study the case systematically in November 1971. Although we made good progress, we did not finish the work to my satisfaction; and so we went back and conducted further interviews in November 1972.

In March 1979 I returned to the area with Dr. Satwant Pasricha. We had follow-up interviews with Hanumant and his father, and we also interviewed the former headman of Kuinya Khera, whom I had not met earlier. I have not met Hanumant since 1979, and so have no recent information about his later development.

An important feature in the investigation of the case was my study of the report of the autopsy on the body of Maha Ram Singh, which Dr. Mehrotra and I examined in November 1971.

Persons Interviewed during the Investigation

In or near the village of Kuinya Khera I interviewed:

Hanumant Saxena
Faujdar Saxena, Hanumant's father
Gainda Wati, Hanumant's mother
Champa, Hanumant's paternal grandmother
Bitoli, Faujdar Saxena's paternal aunt
Lov Kush Ram, Maha Ram Singh's younger brother
Ganga Devi, Maha Ram Singh's wife
Sarnam Singh, Maha Ram Singh's oldest son
Subhash Singh, Maha Ram Singh's youngest son
Devindra Kumar, villager of Kuinya Khera
Bhanwar Singh, villager of Kuinya Khera
Mauji Lal, villager of Kuinya Khera and owner of a tea shop close to which Maha Ram Singh was shot
Lov Kush, villager of Kuinya Khera
Ravindra Kumar Gangwar, former headman of Kuinya Khera

Faujdar Saxena and his wife differed on certain details of their testimony for the case. After considering the discrepancies between what they said and their somewhat different attitudes toward the case—it seems to have interested Hanumant's mother more than his father—I decided that, on the whole, the statements of Hanumant's mother seemed more reliable than those of his father. I shall mention below the most important discrepancy in their statements.

Two members of Maha Ram's family were dissident informants for the case. I shall discuss their attitudes toward it in a separate section below.

Maha Ram's mother, a potentially important informant, had died before the investigation of the case.

Relevant Facts of Geography and Possibilities for Normal Means of Communication between the Two Families

Both families inhabited the village of Kuinya Khera. It is a rather small village located about 20 kilometers west of the city of Farrukhabad. I estimate that its population (at the time I investigated the case) was not more than 1,000.

The houses of the families concerned in the case were approximately 250 meters from each other. They were both constructed of clay—the type of house referred to in India as *kachcha*. The Singhs were more prosperous than the Saxenas. The latter were landless, whereas the Singhs owned 6 bighas of land, the equivalent of about 2 acres. On the other hand, the Saxenas belonged to a slightly higher caste than the Singhs. Taking both factors into account, I do not think that there was much difference between their socioeconomic statuses.

The members of the families concerned knew each other before the development of the case, but Faujdar Saxena said that they were acquaintances rather than friends. At the same time, there must have been some good feeling between them beyond what is customary among acquaintances, because Faujdar attributed Maha Ram's rebirth in his family—as he saw the case—to the fact that Maha Ram "had affection for me"; and Hanumant's mother, Gainda Wati, said that Maha Ram had been a kind of village "father-in-law." She said she had known him "fairly well."

The Life, Death, and Character of Maha Ram Singh

Maha Ram Singh was born in Kuinya Khera in about 1905. He was a peasant and agricultural laborer. He had some land, and he owned a bullock-cart that he drove for hire. He had a younger brother, Lov Kush Ram, and two younger sisters.

He married Ganga Devi, and they had three sons and two daughters.

Lov Kush Ram described his brother as a "simple, good fellow." He was not known to have any enemies.

On the evening of September 28, 1954, Maha Ram was near a tea shop that is at the crossroads less than 200 meters from his house. Someone emerged in the dark and discharged a shotgun at him from within a few meters. The assailant fled, and Maha Ram died almost immediately.

The police conducted a fruitless inquiry. They had no suspects and they made no arrests. No one could think of any reason why anyone would have wanted to kill Maha Ram. My informants conjectured that the murderer intended to kill someone else and, in the dark, mistook Maha Ram for the other person he had meant to shoot.

As happens often after a murder in an Asian village, members of the village—not just the relatives of the deceased man—came to inspect Maha Ram's body. Gainda Wati Saxena was one of those who looked at the body. She after-

ward thought this might have had something to do with Maha Ram's being reborn as her child.[26]

The Report of the Postmortem on Maha Ram. Maha Ram's body was taken to the Civil Hospital in Fatehgarh, where an autopsy on it was performed on September 29, 1954. The pathologist reported a major "gunshot wound," about 3.75 centimeters by 2.5 centimeters in extent, that was located in the middle and lower part of the chest. It penetrated both the chest and abdominal cavities. The lower part of the sternum and the xiphoid process were "completely fractured." Around the main wound there were six smaller wounds, five of which also penetrated both the chest and abdominal cavities. All the wounds were within an approximately circular area with a diameter of about 7.5 centimeters.

Dr. S. C. Pandeya, a staff physician at the Civil Hospital in Fatehgarh, kindly allowed me to examine the autopsy report, and we read it together. Without telling him the location of Hanumant's birthmark, I asked him to indicate (on a crude sketch of the anterior aspect of the human trunk that I made) the location of the wounds described in the autopsy report. Figure 6-26 shows the completed sketch with circles that Dr. Pandeya drew in to show the location of the wounds described in the report. After Dr. Pandeya had completed the sketch reproduced in Figure 6-26, I showed him one that I had made of Hanumant's birthmark the day before. (I had photographed Hanumant's birthmark, but had not yet had my exposed film developed.)

The roman numerals written by Dr. Pandeya on the sketch of Figure 6-26 correspond to the principal wounds described by the physician who conducted the postmortem examination. Of these the most important was the one identified as Number I. The postmortem report described it as: "One gunshot wound (entry). 1 ½ inch x 1 inch and to the depth of the chest and abdominal cavities. In front of the chest in the middle and lower part. Margin turned inside."

The postmortem report referred to the wounds on Maha Ram as gunshot wounds. They were, however, caused by the numerous pellets of a cartridge of a shotgun (Fatteh, 1976; Gordon and Shapiro, 1982; Simpson and Knight, 1947/1985). The pellets discharged from a shotgun disperse more and more widely with increasing distance from the end of the barrel (Di Maio, 1985; Simpson and Knight, 1947/1985). An approximate formula for estimating the distance of an assailant with a shotgun from his victim states that "the spread in centimetres may be taken roughly as equal to two and a half to three times the distance in metres" (Simpson and Knight, 1947/1985, p. 81). (This formula does not take account of variations in the "choke" of the gun, which retards the disper-

[26]Many Asian villagers believe that the soul of a person who dies violently stays close to his physical body after death. Women of child-bearing age are then prone to attract the discarnate person, who, wishing to be reborn, may try to "get into her body" and thus reincarnate.

In the report of the case of Maung Aye Kyaw I give a partial list of cases in which the subject's mother viewed the previous personality's dead body.

In the case of Narong Yensiri his father viewed the dead body of the person whose life Narong later remembered.

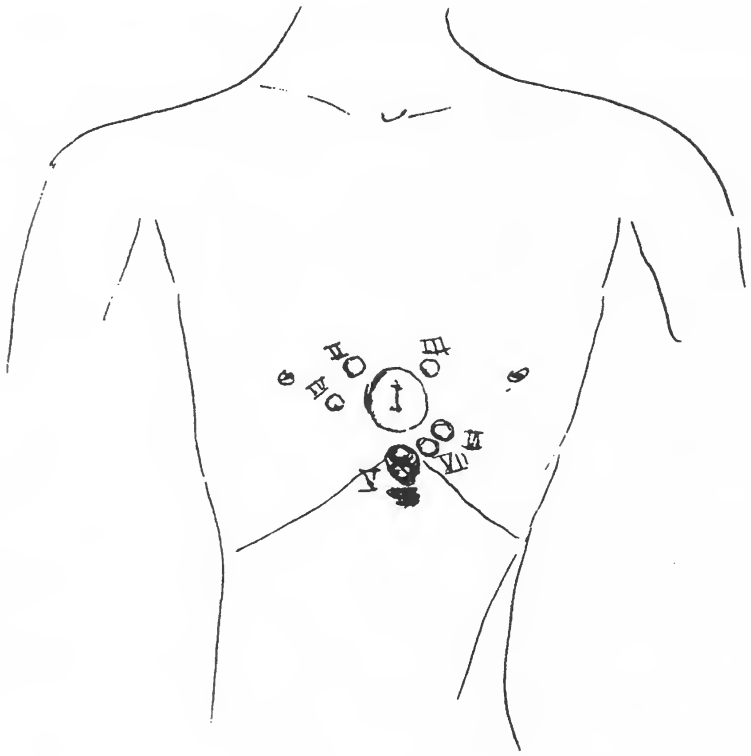

Figure 6-26 Sketch showing location of fatal wounds on Maha Ram Singh. Dr. S. C. Pandeya (Civil Surgeon, Fatehgarh, U.P., India) drew the circles on the lower chest and upper abdomen. The Roman numerals correspond to the different wounds described in the autopsy report. Number I was the largest wound. Note the characteristic smaller wounds on the periphery of the large, central wound. This is due to the scattering of the shot after they leave the barrel of the gun.

sal of the pellets.) Applying this formula to Maha Ram's wounds, we can say that his murderer stood within 3 meters of him when he fired. Figure 6-27 is a photograph of shotgun wounds on a person murdered in Virginia. The range of fire was probably short in this case also, because most of the pellets entered the body in a single group.[27]

An Announcing Dream

Gainda Wati Saxena said that she dreamed of Maha Ram after his death. In the dream he appeared and said: "I am coming to you," and lay down on a cot. Gainda Wati thought she had this dream 3 weeks after Maha Ram's murder. It was not repeated.

When I asked Faujdar in 1971 whether anyone had had a dream related to Hanumant's birth, he said that he had not heard of one. However, in 1972 he

[27]Other cases in which the previous personality died from the wounds of a shotgun include: Ma Mu Mu, Alan Gamble, Bhopal Singh, Semih Tutuşmuş, Pappu Singh, and Obike Nwonye.

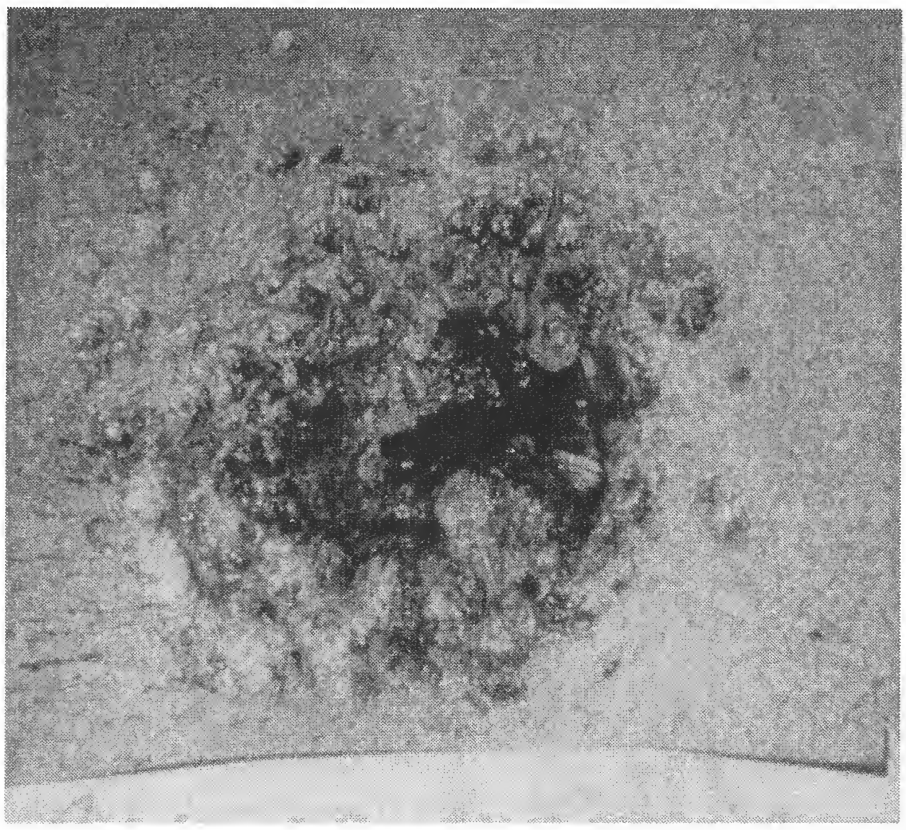

Figure 6-27 Shotgun wounds on a person murdered in Virginia. The gun was probably fired close to the victim because there was little dispersal of the pellets before they struck the body. (Courtesy of Dr. David Wiecking.)

remembered that his wife had had a dream about Maha Ram, which he had dismissed as insignificant. He then (in 1972) recollected that Gainda Wati told him about it just before Hanumant's birth.

Comment. The discrepancy between Faujdar's statement about the dream in 1971 and his statement in 1972 may derive from his not having understood the question put to him in 1971. I think it equally possible, however, that (as he said in 1972) he had earlier disregarded the dream as of no importance and had really forgotten it in 1971. Then in 1972, when his wife mentioned the dream, he remembered that she had told him about it when she was pregnant with Hanumant.

Statements and Recognitions Made by Hanumant

In Table 6-7 I have listed the statements and recognitions that informants in 1971 and 1972 attributed to Hanumant. Hanumant made only a few statements about the previous life. Unlike many subjects of these cases, he never mentioned, or otherwise identified, Maha Ram's murderer. (It is quite possible that the identity of this person never registered in Maha Ram's mind. He was apparently shot in the dark without any

Table 6-7 **Summary of Statements and Recognitions Made by Hanumant**

Item	*Informants*	*Verification*	*Comments*
1. His name was Maha Ram.	Faujdar Saxena, Hanumant's father Gainda Wati, Hanumant's mother	Lov Kush Ram, Maha Ram's brother	
2. He had a house by the road.	Devindra Kumar, villager of Kuinya Khera	I saw Maha Ram Singh's house when I visited Kuinya Khera. It is on the main road.	
3. He had three sons.	Devindra Kumar Gainda Wati		
4. His oldest son was Sarnam.	Faujdar Saxena Bhanwar Singh, villager of Kuinya Khera	Sarnam Singh, Maha Ram's oldest son Bhanwar Singh	
5. He had another son called Lala Ram.	Faujdar Saxena Bhanwar Singh	Lov Kush Ram Bhanwar Singh	
6. He had another son called Subhash.	Faujdar Saxena Bhanwar Singh	Bhanwar Singh	Bhanwar Singh said that Hanumant placed Lala Ram and Subhash in their correct order of birth behind Sarnam.
7. He had two daughters.	Gainda Wati	Lov Kush Ram	

8. He was shot in the chest.	Gainda Wati Devindra Kumar	Lov Kush Ram Mauji Lal, villager of Kuinya Khera Report of autopsy on the body of Maha Ram Singh at the Civil Hospital, Fatehgarh	Both informants for this item said that Hanumant pointed to his chest when he made this statement.
9. Recognition of Maha Ram's bullocks	Gainda Wati Champa, Hanumant's paternal grandmother		Champa said that Hanumant recognized Maha Ram's bullock-cart, not his bullocks. In a small village like Kuinya Khera, every villager would be able to know the ownership of bullocks and bullock-carts.
10. Recognition of Maha Ram's house	Gainda Wati Champa		
11. Recognition of Ganga Devi, Maha Ram's wife	Gainda Wati		Gainda Wati said that once when Ganga Devi happened to pass their house, Hanumant said: "She is my wife."
12. Recognition of Maha Ram's mother	Gainda Wati		Gainda Wati was a secondhand informant for this item, which, however, seems worth including in this tabulation. Maha Ram's mother told her that when Hanumant saw her, he cried. She asked him why he was crying, and he said: "You are my mother." Then she herself wept.

notice. The impact of the bullets hitting him may have knocked him down, and the assailant probably fled before Maha Ram, or anyone else, could see him. Maha Ram may well have died without even having time to think about who might have shot him.)

By the early 1970s, when I investigated the case, Hanumant, who was then 16 years old, had completely forgotten all the memories of the previous life that he had earlier had.

Hanumant's Behavior Related to the Previous Life

Circumstances and Manner of Hanumant's Speaking about the Previous Life. I have already mentioned that Hanumant did not make many statements about the previous life; and he does not appear to have spoken often about it. His spontaneous statements seem to have occurred either when he noticed a person (such as Ganga Devi) or something (such as the bullocks) that had been familiar to Maha Ram. He also made some statements when an older person questioned him.

Two informants mentioned that Hanumant used the present tense when he spoke about the previous life. Thus Devindra Kumar mentioned that Hanumant said: "I *have* three sons" (item 3, Table 6-7). Gainda Wati said that when Hanumant saw Ganga Devi pass in front of the Saxena house, he said: "She *is* my wife" (item 11, Table 6-7). And when he passed Maha Ram's house and bullocks, he said: "This *is* my house and these *are* my bullocks" (items 9 and 10, Table 6-7).

Hanumant's Attitudes toward Maha Ram's Family and Possessions. Faujdar and Gainda Wati gave somewhat different accounts of Hanumant's first visit to Maha Ram's house. Faujdar said that Hanumant had rushed into the house and had to be forcibly extracted from it. Gainda Wati did not confirm this. She said that Hanumant had wished to go into one house that belonged to Maha Ram's family, and she had not permitted him to do so. Then he had wanted to enter another house—the one by the road—and she had allowed him to do this. But (according to her) he had come away afterward quite peacefully. Since Faujdar and Gainda Wati both claimed to have been eyewitnesses of Hanumant's behavior, either one of them had misremembered the incident or they were remembering two different incidents.

Faujdar and Gainda Wati agreed that Hanumant liked to go and play at Maha Ram's house. Faujdar said that Hanumant continued to do this until he was about 10 years old.

Gainda Wati thought that Hanumant liked to go to Maha Ram's house by the side of the road because Maha Ram's mother lived there. Hanumant showed particular affection for her. Faujdar said that once when she came to their house, Hanumant, who must have been quite young then, left his mother's arms and went to Maha Ram's mother; but he does not appear to have said anything to indicate that he had recognized her. Gainda Wati said he liked to play with Maha Ram's mother, who came to visit him often. He sometimes accompanied her into the fields when she went there. Maha Ram's mother told her that once when Hanumant saw her, he wept. She asked him why he was doing that, and he replied: "You are my mother." Then she herself wept. (Gainda Wati did not witness this scene her-

self.) When I asked Gainda Wati about Hanumant's attitude toward Ganga Devi, Maha Ram's wife, she said that he was "very shy." Faujdar said that Hanumant had no interest in Maha Ram's wife and actually avoided meeting her.

Hanumant recognized Maha Ram's bullocks (item 9, Table 6-7). Mauji Lal said that he had heard that Hanumant used to stand in front of the bullock-cart at Maha Ram's house; but he himself had not observed Hanumant doing this, and I did not obtain a firsthand report of such behavior.

Other Relevant Behavior of Hanumant

Hanumant had no significant fears, such as for guns or darkness.

The Attitudes of Members of Maha Ram's Family toward the Case

Lov Kush Ram, Maha Ram Singh's younger brother, had not heard Hanumant make any statement about the previous life. He nevertheless believed that Hanumant was his brother Maha Ram reborn because of the correspondence in location between Hanumant's birthmark and the wounds that Lov Kush Ram saw on his brother's chest after he was killed.

Ganga Devi, Maha Ram's wife, answered a few questions I put to her and then refused to discuss the case further. She was possibly dismayed by the crowd of moderate size that gathered as I tried to talk with her. It is more likely that she misunderstood the purpose of my visit and thought it was part of some government inquiry that she ought to avoid.

Sarnam Singh, Maha Ram's oldest son, alleged that the case was a hoax. He did not give any reason for his suspicions or indicate any possible gain the Saxenas would derive from a hoax. He said that Hanumant had said nothing about the previous life in his presence and had not recognized him. Sarnam further said that none of the members of his family accepted the case as genuine. However, this was not true, because Lov Kush Ram accepted it. When I asked Sarnam whether he had discussed the case with Lov Kush Ram, he said that he had not, and added that he and Lov Kush Ram were on bad terms. He had also not discussed the case with Faujdar Saxena.

Faujdar was not present when I talked with Sarnam. I afterwards discussed Sarnam's negative attitude toward the case with Faujdar. He thought it might have derived from a fear Sarnam might have had that Hanumant and his father would make a claim on Maha Ram's family for a share in their land. This could have led Sarnam to deny the authenticity of the case.

As I mentioned earlier, I interviewed Ravindra Kumar Gangwar, a former headman of Kuinya Khera, in 1979, when Dr. Pasricha and I went there for a follow-up interview. He remembered the case well and believed it genuine. He said that people in the village had begun saying that Hanumant was Maha Ram reborn on the basis of his birthmark alone, before Hanumant had even begun to speak about the previous life. He remembered that Hanumant had said he was Maha Ram and had pointed to the birthmark on his chest.

Hanumant's Birthmark

Figure 6-25 shows Hanumant's birthmark, which actually consisted of two main portions with some satellite marks around them. The birthmark was neither elevated nor depressed, but only an area of diminished pigmentation of the skin compared with the skin around it. It did not discharge any blood or serum after Hanumant was born. No one else in the family had a similar birthmark.

According to Faujdar, Hanumant's birthmark had become somewhat larger since his birth. (Informants for these cases sometimes remark that a birthmark has faded or become smaller since the subject's birth; they rarely say that one has become larger after the child's birth.)

In 1971 and 1972 I neglected to ask whether Hanumant's birthmark had shifted in position since his birth, as some of the birthmarks in these cases do. (The case of Nasruddin Shah, earlier in this chapter, provides an example.) In 1979 I did inquire about a change of position, and Faujdar said that the birthmark was then higher on Hanumant's body than it had been earlier. (I took the photograph of Figure 6-25 in 1971.) He did not mention any lateral shift in the birthmark, which was at the same level as the wounds on Maha Ram, but somewhat more to the right side of the chest than Maha Ram's principal wound, which was reported to be in the midline. However, Hanumant himself said (also in 1979) that the birthmark used to be in his upper abdomen in the midline, so it may have shifted laterally (as well as superiorly) with his growth.

The correspondence in location between Hanumant's birthmark and the wounds that killed Maha Ram was close, but not exact. If we assume that a causal connection between them existed, the difference may be due to a lateral shift in the location of the birthmark since Hanumant's birth (as Hanumant himself suggested), to inexactitude in the pathologist's location of the wounds on Maha Ram's body (he may have described them as being more medial than they were), or to other factors of which we are ignorant.

Hanumant said that he had no pain in the area of the birthmark when he was a young child. However, beginning about 1969, he had noticed some pain in its region. This pain occurred irregularly and lasted only 10 or 15 minutes. Occasionally, the pain would awaken him from sleep. Hanumant did not know what brought the pain on. In 1972 he no longer experienced pain spontaneously in the area of the birthmark, but he still noticed some mild pain there when he lifted a heavy object.

Gainda Wati said that Hanumant had complained of pain in the area *below* the birthmark. Faujdar Saxena was also aware that Hanumant had occasionally had pain in the area of the birthmark. The pain had not evoked much attention in the family.[28]

[28]Most subjects have not complained of pain in the area of the birthmarks, but a substantial minority of them have done so. These include Chanai Choomalaiwong, Alan Gamble, Derek Pitnov, Sunita Khandelwal, Susan Wilson, Maung Win Aung, Patricia Fairley, and Dellâl Beyaz.

Comments on the Evidence of Paranormal Processes in the Case

Hanumant's birthmark is the most important feature of his case. The correspondence between it and the wounds on Maha Ram seems to me unlikely to have occurred by chance.

Other elements in the case are weaker and raise the question of whether Faujdar and Gainda Wati amplified or even invented statements by Hanumant in order to explain the birthmark. The refusal of Maha Ram's wife, Ganga Devi, to cooperate in our investigation and Sarnam Singh's rejection of the case made me concerned about its authenticity.

However, I am inclined to discount Sarnam's rejection of the case. His overt reason for denying its authenticity—that Hanumant could not recognize him—is a familiar one among Asian informants for refusing to accept a case. They attach much more importance to recognitions than I do.[29]

Sarnam Singh may have had other motives for rejecting the case, such as the one suggested by Faujdar—that he (Sarnam) feared Hanumant might try to claim some of the Singhs' land. I have no evidence, however, that Sarnam Singh had such thoughts, and Faujdar, who suggested that he did have them, was an interested party to the case on the other side. I regret that he and Sarnam Singh never discussed the case together.

Fortunately, the case does not depend exclusively on the statements of Hanumant's parents. Several other persons testified about it in a positive way. These included three villagers, one of them a former headman, who were not members of Hanumant's family and who had heard him make at least a few correct statements about Maha Ram's life.

The testimony of informants shows that Hanumant had a definite conviction that he was Maha Ram Singh in a previous life and that he exhibited behavior that was appropriate for such a conviction. I attach more importance to Hanumant's possessiveness toward Maha Ram's house and bullocks than I do to reports of his recognitions of them.

Hanumant's Later Development

Hanumant went to school for only 1 day. Consequently, the only occupation open to him was that of a village laborer, his family being landless. In 1975, at the age of 20, he married, but up to 1979 he and his wife had had no children.

In 1979, when I last met him, Hanumant's birthmark appeared to me to have faded somewhat compared with its appearance as I remembered it to have been 7 years earlier, in 1972. He was still having pain in the area of the birthmark from time to time and in fact had some pain on the day of our visit to Kuinya Khera.

[29]I have elsewhere discussed why, in general, I regard the evidence from a subject's recognitions as less valuable than some other types of evidence found in these cases (Stevenson, 1975b, pp. 39-42; 1987, pp. 111-113).

THE CASE OF SUNITA KHANDELWAL

Summary of the Case and Its Investigation

Sunita Khandelwal was born in Laxmangarh, District Alwar, Rajasthan, India, on September 19, 1969. Her parents were Radhey Shyam Khandelwal and his wife, Santara Bai. They belonged to the caste of Banias (businessmen). They had eight children of whom Sunita was the sixth. Sunita's father was a dealer in grains, seeds, and fertilizers. At the time I investigated this case he was working and living in Assam, from which he came back to Laxmangarh from time to time to visit his family. From the appearance of his house and other information I would place him in the lower middle classes. This classification has some relevance to the case, because the family among whom Sunita claimed to have spent a previous life was much wealthier than her own.

At Sunita's birth she was noticed to have a large birthmark on the right side of her head, which I shall describe later (Figure 6-28). Nothing unusual was noted during Santara Bai's pregnancy with Sunita, and her delivery was entirely normal. Sunita began to speak clearly at the age of about 1½ years.

She first began to speak of a previous life when she was about 2. According to her mother, Sunita's opening declaration was: "Take me to Kota." Her family did not understand this allusion to Kota and asked themselves whether she might be using the Hindi word *kotha*, which means a store-room. They also thought that she might be saying the English word *quota*, and they asked her whether she meant "the quota of sugar." Sunita replied: "My Kota is Bundi-Kota." Bundi is a large town in Rajasthan, about halfway between Jaipur and the city of Kota, so this additional name helped Sunita's family to understand that she was referring to Kota, the city. Then Sunita's family asked her: "What is in Kota?" Sunita said: "I had two brothers. I was the only daughter. I have a mummy and pappa. We have a silver shop and a safe. We have a car and a scooter. My mother has many saris." Asked whether she had a chacha (paternal uncle younger than the father), Sunita replied: "No"; but when asked whether she had a *tau* (paternal uncle older than the father), she said "Yes." At about this time, or a little later, Sunita added that she had fallen down "from a small height." She also pointed to the birthmark on her head saying: "Look here. I have fallen."

Sunita continued to talk about Kota and increased her demands to be taken there. By the time she was 3 she was refusing to eat unless she was taken to Kota, and she became so malnourished that she had to be admitted for a time to a hospital in Alwar, the district city. Her condition was not adequately diagnosed there, and her family thought to help her by pretending to take her to Kota. They took her to Jaipur, told her it was Kota, and asked her to show them her house. Sunita was not deceived. She said: "This is not Kota. This is Jaipur. You are telling lies and will be punished." Instead of taking her on to Kota at this time, her family brought her back to Laxmangarh. There Sunita added some more information to what she had previously said. She stated that the shop in Kota (of the previous family) was in Chauth Mata Bazaar, and the house was in Brijrajpura. (These are quarters of

Figure 6-28 Birthmark on Sunita Khandelwal's head as it appeared in March 1979, when she was 9½ years old. The mark was a hairless, slightly elevated, slightly puckered, and hyperpigmented nevus. It was approximately round in shape and about 2.5 centimeters in diameter.

Kota.) Asked whose daughter she had been, she could give no personal names, but said she was a Bania. (Banias are a subcaste of businessmen.) She said that her (paternal) grandfather was living, but her (paternal) grandmother had died. Upon being questioned further, she said: "My cousin pushed me down the stairs because I had asked for water. I have come here to drink water." Asked whether she had been a boy or girl, she said: "I was a girl and died at the age of 8."

Sunita went on talking about Kota and asking to go there, but her parents did not accede to her wishes, and for 2 years they made no attempt to verify the correctness of what she was saying. In 1974, however, when Sunita was about 5 years old, Kranti Modi, a lawyer and friend of the family who was familiar with her statements, sent a summary of them to H. N. Banerjee in Jaipur. (He had been studying cases of this type for many years.) He came to Laxmangarh, talked with Sunita about her memories, and proposed to take her in a car to Kota in order to verify them. Sunita's family were reluctant to let her go to Kota, but Sunita sat in the car from which she could not be dislodged without force. Eventually, her parents yielded and joined Sunita and the persons taking her to Kota. In Kota the party of visitors went first to the shop of a photographer, Pratap Singh Chordia, who was related to H. N. Banerjee by marriage. He helped the visitors in the search for a family corresponding to Sunita's statements. Sunita's references to a "silver shop" had not been clear; at times she had spoken of "silver coins" at the shop. She had, however, said that her family were Banias, and so the first search included businessmen of various trades, including cloth merchants and sweetmeat sellers. The search was narrowed because Sunita had also mentioned the name of a *mohalla* (district) of Kota (Chauth Mata Bazaar) and that she had fallen from a height. In 1979, Pratap Singh Chordia told us that Sunita was said (perhaps by H. N. Banerjee) to have mentioned, in addition, the name "Prabhu." This made him think of Prabhu Dayal Maheshwari, a jeweler of Chauth Mata Bazaar, photographs of whose family he had taken. However, he did not know at the time that Prabhu Dayal had had a daughter who had died after falling from a height. He advised the party from Laxmangarh to go to Prabhu Dayal's shop, which they did. At Chauth Mata Bazaar, Sunita, according to her mother, recognized a shop with a man in it who was writing. Sunita said that he was her father. This man was Prabhu Dayal Maheshwari, and he was sitting in his own jewelry shop. The matter was explained to him, and he then looked at Sunita and said: "Whose daughter are you?" Sunita answered: "I am your daughter." Prabhu Dayal then invited Sunita to come to his home. Sunita led the way and found Prabhu Dayal's house. She then made a number of other recognitions and some further statements about the life she was remembering. Prabhu Dayal and his wife had lost their only daughter in April 1968. This child, Sakuntala, had fallen over the low railing of a balcony and landed head first on a cement floor below. She died a few hours later. With a few exceptions everything Sunita had said in Laxmangarh was correct for the life and death of Sakuntala in Kota.

Sakuntala's family, much impressed by the accuracy of Sunita's statements about them, quickly accepted her claim to be the reincarnation of Sakuntala. They invited her to visit them, and Sunita did this several times during the next few years. Her health was noted to have improved after her first visit to Kota.

News of the case reached a journalist of Kota, who published a brief account of it in the Hindi newspaper of Kota, *Desh-ki-Dharti*, on January 24, 1975. The account did not state exactly when Sunita had come to Kota for the

visit I have described, but it implied that the visit had occurred shortly before the article was published. Sunita was therefore a few months more than 5 years old when she first went to Kota.

A correspondent in Rajasthan read the newspaper account of the case and notified me immediately. I passed the information on to Dr. Satwant Pasricha and encouraged her to begin studying the case. She was able to have an interview with Prabhu Dayal in November 1975, but could not meet Sunita and her family that year. In 1976 Dr. Pasricha continued the investigation with interviews of informants for both families concerned in the case. In 1978 she met Sunita again briefly and interviewed an additional informant. I have drawn extensively on Dr. Pasricha's notes of these interviews, because I did not participate directly in the investigation until March 1979. In that month and also in October 1979, Dr. Pasricha and I had further interviews with some informants with whom she had already talked, and we also interviewed some new ones.

As mentioned, Sunita had stated no personal names—of herself or members of the previous family—before she went to Kota, or afterward. Although nearly everything in her statements fitted the life of Sakuntala exactly, the question arose of whether other children of Kota might equally well have been found whose lives might have matched Sunita's statements. It seemed particularly important to consider this possibility, because Pratap Singh Chordia, the photographer who had given some indication of where the visitors should look to find the right family and had in fact led them to Prabhu Dayal, could not later remember clearly which details in Sunita's statements had led the search to Prabhu Dayal. (As I mentioned, he thought someone had told him Sunita had said the name "Prabhu.") Pratap Singh Chordia's wife, Sushila, remembered the occasion when Sakuntala's family was identified as being the one that matched her statements; but she was equally vague about the identifying details.

These uncertainties led us (in 1979) to search the records at the M.B.S. Hospital in Kota with a view to learning how frequently children in Kota died of head injuries. The hospital records, as I shall show later, did not permit a conclusive answer to that question, but they did increase my confidence—although leaving it short of absolute certainty—that no other child in Kota could have fitted Sunita's statements as well as Sakuntala did.

Although the two families concerned in this case said that they had never met before the case developed, Dr. Pasricha and I spent much of our time in 1979 in efforts to find possible connections between the two families, connections of which they themselves might have been unaware. In this we succeeded, as I shall explain later.

In November 1981 Dr. Pasricha was again in Kota, where she interviewed Sakuntala's older brother Girdhar Gopal and obtained his testimony about various details of the case. She also had another interview with Sunita's mother, Santara Bai, in Jaipur.

In November 1986 Dr. Pasricha and I were again in Laxmangarh, and we stopped for follow-up interviews with Sunita and her family. We missed meeting

Sunita again, because she was in Jaipur; but we had lengthy interviews with her parents. Dr. Pasricha met Sakuntala's father, Prabhu Dayal, again in Kota in March 1990.

Kranti Modi kept no copy of the list of Sunita's statements that he sent to H. N. Banerjee, and I have not been able to study the list.

Persons Interviewed during the Investigation

In Laxmangarh we interviewed:

Sunita Khandelwal
Radhey Shyam Khandelwal, Sunita's father
Santara Bai Khandelwal, Sunita's mother
Anguri Devi, Sunita's paternal aunt
Kranti Modi, lawyer of Laxmangarh

In Kota we interviewed:

Prabhu Dayal Maheshwari, Sakuntala's father
Krishna Devi, Sakuntala's mother
Shrinath Maheshwari, Prabhu Dayal's older brother
Girdhar Gopal Maheshwari, Sakuntala's older brother
Pratap Singh Chordia, photographer
Sushila Chordia, Pratap Singh Chordia's wife
Manohar Lal, jeweler of Chauth Mata Bazaar
Ram Bharose, Manohar Lal's son
Krishan Lal, cloth merchant of Chauth Mata Bazaar

In Jaipur we interviewed:

Radhey Shyam Khandelwal, Sunita's maternal uncle (who should not be confused with her father, who had the same name)

Dr. Pasricha conducted the interviews in 1975 and 1976. In 1979 we conducted most of the interviews together, although in the autumn of 1979 Dr. Pasricha also conducted some further interviews after I left Rajasthan. In 1981 Dr. Pasricha conducted the interviews with the assistance of Dr. Jamuna Prasad.

During our main interviews for the study of the case in the 1970s, we did not meet Sunita's father, Radhey Shyam Khandelwal, because he was away on business in Assam. We only met him finally at the time of a follow-up interview in November 1986.

Dr. Pasricha and I interviewed some informants more than once. Sometimes the different interviews took place in different cities. For example, Dr. Pasricha first met Sunita's mother in Jaipur, and my only meeting with Sunita also took place at Jaipur, where (in March 1979) she was staying with her maternal uncle.

Although Sunita's father and maternal uncle have the same name, they are not related except by caste.

Relevant Facts of Geography and Possibilities for Normal Means of Communication between the Two Families

Rajasthan is the second largest state in India, and although both the families concerned in this case lived in Rajasthan, we can still regard the case as one of "long distance." Laxmangarh is a small town with a population (estimated for me in 1979) of 5,000. It is in the northeastern part of the state. Kota is a much larger city with a population of about 300,000. It is on the mainline railway between Delhi and Bombay and is an industrial city of considerable importance, especially in Rajasthan, which is not an industrially developed state. Kota is also in the eastern part of Rajasthan, but it is farther west than Laxmangarh and farther south. The distance between the two places is 360 kilometers.

Jaipur, the capital of Rajasthan, also figures in this case and therefore requires mention here. It is located in the north central part of the state, more or less directly north of Kota and west of Laxmangarh, so that lines drawn between the three places on a map form a triangle.

The two families immediately concerned in this case had never met before the case developed. Santara Bai said that she and her husband had never been to Kota before the first visit they made with Sunita, early in 1975. She also said that no member of the family had been to Kota, although in fact her brother, who lived in Delhi and then in Jaipur, had been there numerous times. She may not have known of his visits to Kota; or, if she did know of them, she may have thought the question referred only to her immediate family living in Laxmangarh.

In 1986, when we finally met Sunita's father, he confirmed what Santara Bai had said about their lack of prior knowledge of Kota. He said that he had never been to Kota before Sunita's case developed, and that he had had no friends or acquaintances there and no commercial dealings in Kota or visitors from there.

Similarly, Prabhu Dayal said that he had never been to Laxmangarh before the development of the case and did not, at that time, even know where it was located. His wife, Krishna Devi, had earlier told Dr. Pasricha that she had had no previous acquaintance with Sunita's family before the case developed.

Pursuing this matter further, Dr. Pasricha and I learned that Prabhu Dayal had known Sunita's maternal uncle, Radhey Shyam, before the case developed. They were both jewelers, and they occasionally met in connection with their businesses. Before 1973 Radhey Shyam had lived in Delhi, from which he had traveled for his business to Jaipur and Kota. In Kota Radhey Shyam had become acquainted with Prabhu Dayal, but had never been to his house before the case developed. He had also never heard of Sakuntala's death before then. He seems to have learned of her death only after Sunita's first visit to Kota early in 1975. The evidence for this last conclusion comes from Radhey Shyam's statement that although he heard Sunita talking about the previous life when she came to visit him in Jaipur—during the years 1973 and 1974—and although at that time he was going to Kota (from Jaipur) about once a month, he never made any attempt to verify Sunita's statements. If he had known about Sakuntala's death from a fall, he

could easily have asked Prabhu Dayal whether Sunita's other statements also fitted his dead daughter. Prabhu Dayal confirmed Radhey Shyam's account of their relationship; they had, he said, been acquainted and had had business dealings, but no social relationship. He confirmed that Radhey Shyam had never been to his house in Kota before the case developed.

The Life, Death, and Character of Sakuntala

Sakuntala was the only daughter of Prabhu Dayal Maheshwari and his wife, Krishna Devi. They had two sons. Sakuntala was born on February 22, 1960.

Following an illness Sakuntala was noted to have a strabismus of one eye and thereafter wore corrective glasses. Otherwise her development and health had been normal. At the time of her death she was attending school in Kota and was in the third or fourth grade. (Her mother later did not remember the grade precisely.)

Prabhu Dayal's house was a moderately large one, and like many houses in India it had a central open area. At one side of this area a staircase led from the ground floor to the next story, and at the top there was a somewhat narrow balcony with a rather low railing. Doors to rooms above opened on this balcony. I examined this area of the house and estimated the distance between the balcony and the concrete floor below as not less than 5 meters.

In the late afternoon of April 27, 1968, Sakuntala and her younger cousin, Radhey, were at the top of the stairs on the balcony. Prabhu Dayal was at his shop, but his wife was in the house. She heard Sakuntala say that Radhey might fall down. (Radhey was younger than Sakuntala, who apparently felt some concern about her.) A minute later Krishna Devi heard the sound of Sakuntala falling and, rushing to her, found her unconscious with blood running out of one ear. She called Prabhu Dayal, who came home immediately and took Sakuntala to the M.B.S. Hospital.

In an interview with Dr. Pasricha in October 1979 (when I was not present), Prabhu Dayal said that when he had come home he had noticed that Sakuntala had injured the top of her head and that there was some slight bleeding from a wound there. (He no longer remembered the side of the head on which he had seen this wound.) He also noticed that blood was coming out of one of her ears.

The records of the M.B.S. Hospital (which I examined on March 15, 1979) showed that Sakuntala was admitted there at 4:50 p.m. on April 27, 1968. (The notes recorded that she had fallen from the second story at 4:15 p.m.) She was unconscious, vomiting, and bleeding from the right ear. (The notes in the chart did not mention a wound at the top of her head. The bleeding from her ear indicated a fracture at the base of the skull.)

At that time Kota had no neurosurgeon and the treatment given to Sakuntala consisted of supportive measures only, in the (slight) hope that she might recover spontaneously. However, her condition deteriorated, and she died 9 hours after her admission at 1:45 a.m. on April 28. The only diagnosis on the

record pages was the provisional one of "Head injury." There was no autopsy, and Sakuntala's body was cremated a few hours after her death at about 8:00 a.m. of the same day.

Sakuntala died in childhood, before her personality had become fully developed. She appears to have been somewhat advanced for her age in development. For example, she liked to wear saris, which is not usual for 8-year-old girls in India. She was performing well at school. She was somewhat more interested in religion and more pious than other children of her age.

Statements and Recognitions Made by Sunita

In Table 6-8 I have listed the statements and recognitions attributed to Sunita. For these, her mother was our principal informant. (As mentioned, her father was nearly always away when we were in Laxmangarh.) However, we obtained some corroboration from Sunita's paternal aunt, Anguri Devi, and her maternal uncle, Radhey Shyam.

So far as I know, Sunita made all the statements of items 1-25 before her first visit to Kota.

I have also included in Table 6-8 a number of the statements and recognitions that informants (mostly Sunita's mother) said Sunita had made during her first visit to Kota (items 26-34). The recognitions of Prabhu Dayal, his shop, and his home have relatively little value, not because Santara Bai was our only informant for them, but because members of the party with Sunita may already have learned that Prabhu Dayal had lost a young daughter who had fallen from a height and was therefore the father they were looking for. The jewelry shops in Kota are small and usually managed by one or two persons only, so that once having arrived at Prabhu Dayal's shop, even a young child could infer that the man sitting there was Prabhu Dayal. After the conversation with Prabhu Dayal, he invited the party to come to his house, and, although Sunita led the way, we cannot exclude the possibility that Prabhu Dayal may have given her cues about the correct route. At the house itself, Sunita remarked that the family had another house (item 29), and this statement appears to have been quite spontaneous and not guided. A noteworthy feature of Sunita's first visit to Kota is that, in contrast to so many similar visits by subjects to the places where they claim to have lived, a crowd did not gather around the visitors or burst into Prabhu Dayal's house.

When Dr. Pasricha first interviewed Sunita in 1976, she still had some memories of the previous life, although she had forgotten the cause of death. By the time I met her in 1979, her imaged memories of the previous life had faded, although she still showed an eagerness to visit the previous family in Kota.

Although I have recorded Sunita as having said that the previous family had a silver shop (item 16, Table 6-8), she may not have been quite so specific. The statement about the silver shop derived from Dr. Pasricha's interview with Santara Bai in November 1976. However, as I mentioned earlier, Sunita's family seems to have been initially uncertain with regard to the kind of shop to which Sunita was

Table 6-8 **Summary of Statements and Recognitions Made by Sunita**

Item	*Informants*	*Verification*	*Comments*
1. She was from Kota.	Santara Bai, Sunita's mother Anguri Devi, Sunita's paternal aunt Radhey Shyam, Sunita's maternal uncle	Prabhu Dayal, Sakuntala's father	
2. Her Kota was Bundi-Kota.	Santara Bai	Maps of India	Bundi is a town of Rajasthan located about 40 kilometers north and slightly west of Kota. It is smaller than Kota.
3. The river Chambal is at Kota.	Santara Bai	I saw the river myself when I was at Kota.	Sunita's mention of the Chambal River was part of her effort to identify what she meant by Kota.
4. She had a "mummy" and a "daddy."	Santara Bai Anguri Devi	Prabhu Dayal Krishna Devi, Sakuntala's mother	Santara Bai said that Sunita used the word *daddy*, and Anguri Devi said she used the word *pappa*. Sunita may have used both these words at different times. See text for discussion of Sunita's use of these words.
5. Her father's mother had died.	Santara Bai Anguri Devi	Prabhu Dayal	Prabhu Dayal's mother died when he himself was a young child. The Hindi word *dadi* distinguishes the father's mother from the mother's mother, who is called *nani*.

6. Her father's father was still alive.	Santara Bai	Prabhu Dayal Krishna Devi	Hindi words distinguish the *dada* (father's father) from the *nana* (mother's father).
7. She was the only daughter.	Santara Bai	Prabhu Dayal Krishna Devi	
8. She had two brothers.	Santara Bai Anguri Devi	Prabhu Dayal Krishna Devi	
9. Her mother had many saris.	Santara Bai	Krishna Devi	This item was an expression of Sunita's awareness that the previous family had more money and property than her family.
10. Her mother used to prepare a special dish from oranges.	Santara Bai	Krishna Devi	A food from oranges was prepared in the family for use as a *prasad* (gift) in worship at the temple. Krishna Devi did not make this dish herself, but as she was almost certainly the one to give it to Sakuntala, a young child like Sakuntala might have thought her mother had actually made the food.
11. She had no chacha [paternal uncle younger than father].	Santara Bai	Prabhu Dayal	
12. She did have a tau [paternal uncle older than father].	Santara Bai	Prabhu Dayal	

Table 6-8 *(continued)*

Item	*Informants*	*Verification*	*Comments*
13. She was a Bania.	Santara Bai	Prabhu Dayal	Banias are a subcaste of the Vaishyas. They are principally businessmen.
14. They had a scooter.	Santara Bai	Prabhu Dayal	
15. They had a car.	Santara Bai	Incorrect	Prabhu Dayal bought a car only in 1974, 6 years after Sakuntala's death.
16. They had a silver shop.	Santara Bai	Prabhu Dayal	Prabhu Dayal was a *saraf,* who sold jewelry and silver. See text for discussion of some uncertainty concerning this item.
17. They had a safe.	Santara Bai	Prabhu Dayal	This item adds little new information, because all silver dealers and jewelers have safes.
18. The shop was in Chauth Mata Bazaar.	Santara Bai Radhey Shyam Khandelwal, Sunita's father	Dr. Pasricha and I visited Prabhu Dayal's shop in Chauth Mata Bazaar.	The name identifies a particular section of Kota, but it is not specific for Prabhu Dayal, because numerous jewelers had their shops there. Radhey Shyam Khandelwal said that Sunita "told about Chauth Mata Bazaar" without saying specifically that she had located the shop there, although it would be understood that a shop would be in a bazaar.
19. Their home was in Brijrajpura.	Santara Bai	Dr. Pasricha and I visited Sakuntala's home in Brijrajpura.	Kranti Modi remembered Sunita as having said that she had lived in the Mata Wala district of Kota.

20. Her father applied *mehandi*.	Anguri Devi	Incorrect	Although Sunita erred in stating that Sakuntala's father had been the one to apply mehandi to her, mehandi figured in Sakuntala's life shortly before she died. See text for discussion. Mehandi is a dye sometimes used in a healing ritual.
21. She was 8 when she died.	Santara Bai	Prabhu Dayal Krishna Devi	Sakuntala was 8 years and 2 months old when she died.
22. She drank some water before she died.	Anguri Devi	Unverified	In 1976, and also in 1979, Krishna Devi could not recall what Sakuntala had done just before she went upstairs to the balcony from which she fell.
23. She went upstairs before she died.	Anguri Devi	Krishna Devi	Sakuntala fell down from the balcony, so she was upstairs when she fell; but Krishna Devi did not say for how long before her fall she had been upstairs.
24. She fell from a small height.	Santara Bai	Krishna Devi	Prabhu Dayal, who was at his shop when the accident occurred, was a secondhand verifier of this item. The "small height" was about 5 meters.
25. Her cousin pushed her down the stairs.	Santara Bai	Unverified	Krishna Devi said that Sakuntala and her cousin had been playing when Sakuntala fell over the railing. It is unlikely that Radhey pushed Sakuntala *over* the railing; but it is

Table 6-8 *(continued)*

Item	*Informants*	*Verification*	*Comments*
			quite possible that the girls were playfully pushing each other, and that while they were doing this, Sakuntala stepped back, lost her balance, and fell over the railing.
26. Recognition of Prabhu Dayal's shop	Santara Bai Krishna Devi Radhey Shyam Khandelwal		This item is of little value, because persons who were with Sunita knew that Prabhu Dayal was probably the person about whose family Sunita had been talking. Krishna Devi was a secondhand informant for this item. I have listed her as an informant for it, however, as evidence that the group with Sunita believed (and told her) that Sunita "was able to reach the shop on her own."
27. Recognition of Prabhu Dayal in his shop	Santara Bai		Prabhu Dayal was sitting in his shop and writing when Sunita and the persons with her approached. According to Radhey Shyam Khandelwal, he and his wife remained outside the shop while the persons who had brought Sunita to Kota entered the shop with her. (He did not say he had heard Sunita recognize Prabhu Dayal.) Santara Bai, however, described the scene as if she had been inside the shop or at least had heard Sunita tell Prabhu Dayal that she was his daughter.

28. Recognition of the way to Prabhu Dayal's house	Santara Bai Radhey Shyam Khandelwal		Prabhu Dayal attached no importance to this recognition—and neither do I— because the people accompanying Sunita may have known by this time that he had lost a daughter in circumstances corresponding to Sunita's statements. Both Santara Bai and Radhey Shyam Khandelwal said that Sunita led the way. There were several turns in the road between the shop and the house, as I observed myself when I went from the shop to the house in 1979. Nevertheless, this recognition also has little value, since Prabhu Dayal accompanied the party to his house.
29. Her family had another, older house.	Santara Bai	Prabhu Dayal	After Sunita and those with her reached Prabhu Dayal's house, and she had identified it, someone asked her whether it was her house. To this she replied: "This is our new house; we have another house also." The family had lived in the older house until 1966 or 1967, when (during Sakuntala's lifetime) they had purchased an adjoining house, which they had demolished and rebuilt, so that it could fairly be described as new. Prabhu Dayal and his immediate family moved into the new house while his older brother continued to live in the older one.

Table 6-8 *(continued)*

Item	*Informants*	*Verification*	*Comments*
30. Recognition of the family's older house	Santara Bai		Immediately after the preceding item, Sunita was asked where the older house was, and she correctly pointed to it.
31. She used to swing on the neem tree.	Santara Bai	Unverified	Sunita pointed to the neem tree when she made this remark, apparently quite spontaneously.
32. Recognition of Sakuntala and her cousin Radhey in a photograph	Santara Bai Shrinath Maheshwari, Sakuntala's paternal uncle Krishna Devi		The photograph showed only Sakuntala and Radhey so that Sunita might have guessed which was which. Of more importance was Sunita's showing the photograph to everyone in the group while saying: "This is me and that is my cousin who threw me down the stairs." Only Sunita's mother reported this comment by Sunita; the other two informants for her recognition of Sakuntala in the photograph did not.
33. She was older than her cousin.	Krishna Devi	Prabhu Dayal	Sunita told Radhey: "I was older before, now you are older." Sakuntala was 8 when she died; Radhey was 4 or 5 at that time.
34. Her family did not have a radio and gas before.	Krishna Devi	Krishna Devi	The radio had been bought and gas installed in the house after Sakuntala's death.

referring; and Prabhu Dayal had said earlier, in 1975, that Sunita's family interpreted references she was making to "silver coins" as indicating not a jeweler's shop, but some other kind of business, such as a candy shop or a draper's shop. In 1979 Dr. Pasricha questioned Santara Bai about this detail, and at that time she remembered Sunita as having said that the shop of the previous family sold gold and silver. From this they had inferred that she was talking about a jeweler's shop, but Sunita had not used the Hindi word for jeweler herself.

Sunita's reference to mehandi (item 20, Table 6-8) showed a "near miss." Sakuntala's parents decided to perform a ritual for the improvement of Sakuntala's strabismus. They therefore took a vow, and then Krishna Devi applied mehandi (a dye) to both of Sakuntala's hands. She did this only a few days before Sakuntala's death. Sakuntala had asked her mother to be the one to apply the mehandi, which makes it puzzling that Sunita should have said that her (previous) father had done it. He had, however, participated in the decision to apply mehandi to Sakuntala and in the accompanying vow.[30]

At Sakuntala's house in Kota, Sunita did not recognize either Krishna Devi (Sakuntala's mother) or Shrinath Maheshwari (Sakuntala's paternal uncle). She also did not recognize Sakuntala's two brothers.

I have omitted from Table 6-8 several statements and recognitions attributed to Sunita about which I obtained conflicting or insufficient testimony. However, if they happened as reported, their omission has the effect of lessening the evidence of paranormal processes in the case. Two examples will perhaps suffice to illustrate what I mean. I have already mentioned the first, which is that Pratap Singh Chordia said in 1979 that H. N. Banerjee had mentioned the name "Prabhu"; presumably he had heard the name spoken by Sunita or her parents. However, informants for Sunita's family did not credit Sunita with having mentioned this name, and so I have not either. Similarly, a cloth merchant, Krishan Lal, whom we interviewed (also in 1979) said H. N. Banerjee had come to his shop in Kota because Sunita had mentioned the name "Shrinath," and Krishan Lal's shop was known as "Shrinath Gopal." Sakuntala's paternal uncle was called Shrinath, and we interviewed him. However, although Sunita had said that she had had a tau (father's older brother), no other informant said that she had given the uncle's name.

Sunita's Statements about Events Occurring after Sakuntala's Death and before Her Birth. Not long after Sunita began to speak about the previous life, she referred, in the following words, to what happened after she fell down

[30]Frequently in these cases the death of the previous personality seems to produce a "flashbulb memory" (Brown and Kulik, 1977; Stratton, 1919) so that events not causally related to the death but occurring shortly before it become remembered and later figure disproportionately, compared with memories of other events, in the subject's statements. In the present case, Sunita's reference to drinking water shortly before going up to the balcony from which Sakuntala fell down (although unverified) provides another example of the same feature. Other examples occurred in the cases of Tali Sowaid, Maung Aye Kyaw, Michael Wright, Dellâl Beyaz, Sukla Gupta, Ma Mu Mu, Mehmet Karaytu, Daw Aye Than, Maung Mhat Tin, the Ven. U Sobhana, Ma Myint Thein, Maung Aung Than, Imad Elawar, and Zouheir Chaar.

from the balcony: "I went up. There was a *baba* (holy man) with a long beard. They checked my record and said: 'Send her back.'[31] There are some rooms there. I have seen God's house. It is very nice. You do not know everything that is there."

On another occasion Sunita remarked: "When I fell from a small height, I got a mark, but when I was thrown down from the great height I got no mark." The first part of this sentence referred to Sunita's birthmark, the second to her return to a terrestrial life from "God's house." This does not mean that Sunita drew attention to her birthmark before she had been told about it. She may have done so, but I have no notes stating that she did. Probably her parents drew her attention to it, and she, as well as her parents, then connected it with the fall "from a small height."

Once Sakuntala's mother asked Sunita why she had been "born in that family...Laxmangarh is so far" (meaning from Kota). Sunita replied: "It is [far] for you, not for God." (Sunita's mother, not Sakuntala's, told us about this exchange.)

Sunita's Behavior Related to the Previous Life

Circumstances and Manner of Sunita's Speaking about the Previous Life. Sunita, during the peak of her talk about the previous life, needed no stimulus to refer to it. She talked about it constantly, and I have already described how she refused for a time to eat and became ill when frustrated in her demands to be taken to Kota.

Sunita claimed to miss a dish prepared with oranges and said to her mother: "You never make a special dish with oranges; my mother used to make it" (item 10, Table 6-8).

An awareness of the marked difference in the economic position of the two families seemed to stimulate some of Sunita's remarks. She said her father was rich and that she ate better food and had better clothes in the previous life. Sometimes she even left her food without eating it all with a remark such as: "This is not the type of food we used to have." She also commented on the dirtiness of the other children in Laxmangarh.

Sunita's mother said that sometimes Sunita would dream of the previous life, then wake up and be unable to get back to sleep again.

When Sunita went to Kota on visits, she sometimes asked Sakuntala's family to give her "my specs," meaning the eyeglasses that Sakuntala wore to correct her strabismus. (Sunita seems not to have actually worn the glasses.) She also asked for Sakuntala's school bag.

Sunita's Behavior with Sakuntala's Family. Sunita was entirely comfortable and relaxed at Sakuntala's home in Kota; but Prabhu Dayal and his wife

[31]Persons in India who nearly die but recover often report that during the period when they were seemingly dead they were taken to a place where their records were checked, and they were then sent back (Pasricha, 1995; Pasricha and Stevenson, 1986). In these cases the sending back is to the person's unconscious body, which then revives. In Sunita's case, she said that she was sent back to a new body.

received her so well and gave her so much affection—not necessarily more than she had in Laxmangarh—that her feeling of being at home with them may require no further explanation.

A degree of peremptoriness sometimes affected her remarks in Kota, and she would ask Krishna Devi: "To whom did you give my books?" and "Where are my suitcases?"

Sunita's mother noticed that she behaved coolly toward Radhey, Sakuntala's younger cousin, who Sunita thought had pushed Sakuntala over the railing. However, Sakuntala's parents did not confirm this. They said that Sunita was somewhat shy for a few days when she first came to visit them in Kota, but then she mixed freely with the other children. They had never heard Sunita say that Radhey had pushed her over the railing, and they did not think that Sunita's behavior toward Radhey was in any way inimical.

Other Behavior of Sunita Related to the Previous Life. Sunita had no phobia of heights.

Her mother remarked that her Hindi seemed to have more English words than did that of other members of the family. Hindi was the language spoken in Sakuntala's family, and she knew no English as such. However, Hindi contains many English loan-words, especially for objects invented and developed in the 19th and 20th centuries. There are more such objects in the homes of more prosperous families in India than in those who are less well-to-do. If Sunita had memories for the names of such objects, her Hindi would have included more English words than that of other members of her family.

Sunita referred to vegetables with the word *sabazi*, whereas her family used the word *bhaji* for vegetables. In Sakuntala's family vegetables were called "sag" or "sabazi."

The other children of Sunita's family called their father "Pitaji," and their mother "Mataji," which are the usual expressions for father and mother in Hindi; Sunita, however, called her parents "Daddy" (or "Pappa") and "Mummy." One might have expected that Sakuntala had used these words for her parents, but this was not so. Sakuntala had called her father "kaka" (a variant of chacha, which means "uncle") and her mother "baiji" (which means "sister"). Children in the joint families of India often use words of this type for their parents because they imitate adults and older children whom they hear using them. "Mummy" and "Daddy" appear to be expressions that Sunita adopted as a means for avoiding confusion between the two sets of parents that she was claiming.[32] However, she did not work her system out fully, because she also referred to the previous parents as "Mummy" and "Daddy" (or "Pappa"). Krishna Devi (Sakuntala's mother) remarked that Sunita, when she came to Kota, called her "Mummy." However, Sunita was aware that this was not right for Sakuntala, and she once told Krishna

[32]Gamini Jayasena was another subject who adopted unusual names for his parents in an apparent effort to avoid confusion between the two pairs of parents he was remembering.

Devi: "Previously I used to call you 'Baiji' and called him [indicating Prabhu Dayal] 'Kaka.'"

Other Relevant Behavior of Sunita

Sunita's mother credited her with more powers of extrasensory perception than most parents of the subjects of these cases believe their children have.[33] For example, Santara Bai said that Sunita would sometimes say to her: "Don't cook for me. My parents in Kota have cooked a special dish." Santara Bai said that she had confirmed with Sakuntala's family the correctness of such statements by Sunita, but Krishna Devi could not remember having done this.

On the only occasion when Sakuntala's parents came to visit Sunita in Laxmangarh, they did so without advance notice. Santara Bai said that Sunita had correctly predicted this visit. She had refused to eat her lunch because they (her parents from Kota, as she saw the situation) were coming. They did come, and she had a late lunch with them. (I did not try to confirm this episode with Sakuntala's parents.)

Sunita's mother considered her definitely more pious than her other children. She was also more generous, for example to beggars, than her siblings.

The Attitude of Sakuntala's Family toward Sunita

Sakuntala's family accepted Sunita as a member of their family almost immediately after they met her. Perhaps this is not surprising given their still unassuaged grief over Sakuntala's death and Sunita's attractiveness. Prabhu Dayal would not commit himself to saying that he was convinced that Sunita was Sakuntala reborn. He seemed satisfied with having at least a surrogate daughter who visited him and his family—and who enjoyed visiting them—from time to time. He showed more interest in my opinion of the case than do most of the informants for these cases, and this may have reflected his doubts about it. Krishna Devi had an equal affection for Sunita, but she expressed herself convinced that Sunita was Sakuntala reborn. Her acceptance of this came from the correctness of Sunita's statements, from Sunita's complete friendliness with them, and from a certain facial resemblance that she saw between Sunita and Sakuntala.

Prabhu Dayal's older brother, Shrinath, expressed skepticism about the case, although he did not reject it outright. He appears to have disapproved of the affection his brother lavished on Sunita, who was, for him, a girl from a strange family.

[33]Few subjects of these cases show any evidence of paranormal powers, such as telepathy, apart from their claimed memories of a previous life. Nevertheless, some remarkable exceptions have occurred. Subjects who have given credible evidence of extrasensory perception with members of the previous personality's family include Gnanatilleka Baddewithana, Swarnlata Mishra, Shamlinie Prema and Nirankar Bhatnagar. Ratana Wongsombat impressed her stepgrandfather (Samnuan Wongsombat) with extrasensory perception related to him, but not to the family of the person whose life she remembered.

At the time of Sunita's first visit to Kota, Prabhu Dayal and Krishna Devi were so taken with her (and her claims to be Sakuntala reborn) that they wanted her to stay with them; and Sunita herself wanted to stay in Kota. Sunita's parents briefly considered allowing her to stay, but decided against this. They did subsequently allow Sunita to visit Sakuntala's family, and she had gone for visits to Kota several times between 1975 and 1979. Prabhu Dayal and his family had come once to Laxmangarh to visit Sunita. They had also given her and her mother rather expensive gifts,[34] and they had proposed that Sunita live with them in Kota and go to school there.

When I asked Prabhu Dayal whether Sunita's family had ever asked for gifts, he said that they had not.

Sunita's family had given some gifts to Sakuntala's, but in keeping with the respective wealths of the families, Sakuntala's had given more gifts and more expensive ones.

Sunita's Birthmark

Figure 6-28 shows the birthmark on the right parietal area of Sunita's head as it appeared in March 1979, when she was 9½ years old. The mark was approximately round in shape with irregular edges and about 2.5 centimeters in diameter. It was a hairless hyperpigmented nevus, slightly raised and slightly puckered.

When Sunita was born, the birthmark was bleeding. Her family applied talcum powder to the site, and the bleeding stopped after 3 days.

Sunita did not complain (in early childhood) of headaches in the area of the birthmark or elsewhere.

Radhey Shyam (Sunita's maternal uncle) said that he did not know of any other member of the family who had a birthmark like Sunita's.

The Correspondence between Sunita's Statements and Sakuntala's Life

Because Sunita had mentioned no personal names—even though she had mentioned Kota and two localities within it—the question arose of whether some other girl might have lived whose life corresponded with Sunita's statements as closely as Sakuntala's did. The endeavor to answer this question led first to inquiries about the frequency with which young girls were killed in Kota by falling from heights.

Inquiries Concerning the Frequency of Death from Head Injury among Children of Kota. The records available at the M.B.S. Hospital in Kota, where Sakuntala died, did not furnish all the information I should have wished concerning deaths similar to that of Sakuntala among the children of Kota. The registries

[34]When I asked Prabhu Dayal directly about these gifts, he denied having given any to Sunita and her family; but I had tactlessly asked this question in the presence of his older brother, and it seems likely that he did not wish his brother to know the extent of his attachment to Sunita.

of the surgical wards of the hospital (to which patients with head injuries would normally be admitted) showed that for the first 5½ months of 1968, 13 female children from Kota under the age of 12 were admitted to the hospital with a provisional diagnosis of "head injury." The records did not give particulars of how the children had been injured or state which of them had died. However, the ages of 12 of the children were given, and of these, 8 were 5 years or younger and 4 were 7 years or older. Although it is impossible to be certain, I conjecture that the group of younger girls was mainly comprised of children who had fallen while running or had otherwise accidentally bumped their heads seriously enough to be admitted to the hospital. Sakuntala was listed among the group of 4 older children, and some others of that group might also have fallen from heights.

The hospital's records of deaths from head injury listed 4 females as having died with that diagnosis during 1968. Two women died from head injuries in 1967 and 7 in 1969. Here, however, all ages and all types of injuries were lumped together. Girls and women can receive head injuries in many ways besides falling from heights. Women do not ride bicycles as much as men in India, but they ride scooters, particularly as passengers on scooters driven by men. These provide many opportunities for head injuries. Vehicles moving too fast through crowded bazaars and streets also account for many head injuries among both men and women; so do buses, for the passengers riding in them. The records of deaths also did not distinguish between patients residing in Kota and others brought to the hospital from outside the city; the catchment area of the hospital extends in a radius of at least 50 kilometers around Kota. On the other hand, the hospital records would not show a certain number of persons, including girls and women, who died of head injuries without ever being brought to the hospital. Within Kota itself, however, most injured patients would be brought to the hospital, and we have seen that Sakuntala's family brought her there within a little more than half an hour of her fall, notwithstanding her father's having had to return from his shop in order to do this.

The results of this inquiry permit me to make no decisive statement on the matter. The most important datum developed from it is that only 3 other females (besides Sakuntala) were recorded as having died from head injuries at the M.B.S. Hospital in 1968. These 3 females could have been of any age and could have been injured in a variety of ways. I feel justified in concluding therefore that deaths of young girls through falling from a small height (as Sunita described it) were rare in Kota in 1968, and Sakuntala's may well have been unique.

A girl whose life Sunita was recalling need not have died in 1968, but during some earlier year, although this was not likely to have been more than 5 years before Sunita's birth. (The median interval between the previous personality's death and the subject's birth in 95 Indian cases was 16 months [Stevenson, 1983a]; 5 years, therefore, provides a generous allowance for the interval.) However, because as many as a dozen girls might have died of head injuries in Kota during the period in question, we should ask to what extent other details that Sunita mentioned can increase our confidence that she was remembering Sakuntala's life and no other.

The Correspondence between Sunita's Statements and Details Other than Sakuntala's Fatal Accident. Because I could not reach certainty from the hospital records that no other child in Kota had died (within a few years of Sunita's birth) after falling from a height as had Sakuntala (even though I think this extremely unlikely), I appraised the remaining details of her statements with regard to their specificity, not singly, but collectively. I asked myself to how many other children they might have applied just as well as to Sakuntala. Sunita gave as place names within Kota the quarter (Chauth Mata Bazaar) where she said her previous father had his shop and the quarter (Brijrajpura) where the previous family lived. She also said—although she was not explicit in this—that her father's business was concerned with silver. The quarters she named are small portions of the city of Kota, and I think it extremely unlikely that any father in Kota qualifying with regard to these three details (additional to Prabhu Dayal) would have lost a daughter from a head injury (through falling down) during the period of 5 years prior to Sunita's birth.

However, Sunita also stated a large number of other details which were all, with one exception, accurate for Sakuntala's family, and although these are not individually specific, taken together they are unlikely to be correct for other persons. Here I am thinking of the following items among her statements: She was the only daughter; she died at the age of 8; her parents were both living; a paternal grandmother had died, but a paternal grandfather was living; she had no uncle younger than her father, but one older than he; she had two brothers and a girl cousin. The detail about mehandi—slightly off the mark, admittedly—adds a further, if unmeasurable degree of specificity to the matching of statements and facts.

Finally, the extensive inquiries of Pratap Singh Chordia in 1975 and of our team in 1975, 1976, and 1979 became known to a considerable if incalculable number of persons not directly interviewed. I believe that if the life of another deceased girl of Brijrajpura had corresponded to Sunita's statements, persons knowing of her would have informed either Pratap Singh Chordia or ourselves.

No one can say that all these details and circumstances put together absolutely exclude the possibility that Sunita's statements did refer to another deceased girl instead of to Sakuntala. One is always left with a degree of uncertainty in cases the subjects of which do not mention personal names. However, I think the residual uncertainty is so small in the present case that we can confidently disregard it.[35]

Comments on the Evidence of Paranormal Processes in the Case

If we decide that Sunita's statements match facts in the life of Sakuntala Maheshwari and not those of any other child in Kota, we have still to consider

[35]I consider a few other cases solved even though the subject did not state a personal name of the previous family. Such cases include those of Dolon Champa Mitra, Indika Guneratne, Iranga Jayakody, Thusitha Silva, and Subashini Gunasekera.

the possibility that she might somehow have acquired the correct information she showed about Sakuntala's life through normal means. The business relationship between Prabhu Dayal and Sunita's uncle, Radhey Shyam, provided the only possible line of transmission between the two families that I could discover. But the contacts between the two men were—according to both of them—entirely commercial; they had no social relations with each other. Still, businessmen do sometimes talk about private affairs, especially their griefs, with their business associates. Evidence that this did not happen in the present case comes—as I mentioned in an earlier section of this report—from the statement of Sunita's uncle Radhey Shyam that he had never heard of Sakuntala's death until Sunita first went to Kota and also from Radhey Shyam's failure to make any attempt to verify her statements, even though he was going to Kota once a month and sometimes meeting Prabhu Dayal there. To suppose that he nevertheless learned all about Sakuntala and then somehow passed all the information he obtained to Sunita without afterward remembering that he had done this is to imagine him much more forgetful than any other evidence allows us to believe.

Sunita's Later Development

Following our principal investigations of the 1970s, our next information about Sunita derived from Dr. Pasricha's interview with her mother, Santara Bai, in November 1981. Sunita was then a little more than 12 years old. She was in the eighth class of school and was doing well in her studies.

Sunita no longer spoke spontaneously about the previous life, and her family did not ask her about it. Her mother believed that she still had some memories of it that she kept to herself.

Sunita had continued to visit Sakuntala's family in Kota, and Santara Bai thought that she was happier there than in Laxmangarh. Sakuntala's family had invited her to Kota for the wedding of Girdhar Gopal (Sakuntala's older brother) in 1980, and she had gone. Prabhu Dayal's immediate family continued to treat Sunita with the greatest affection. His older brother, as before, remained somewhat aloof toward her.

As I mentioned earlier, we missed meeting Sunita at the time of our follow-up visit in Laxmangarh in November 1986. The following information derives from her parents, principally her mother, Santara Bai. Sunita was 17 years old and in good health. She was studying in a higher secondary school. She no longer spoke about the previous life, and Santara Bai thought that she had forgotten her original memories of it. However, she was continuing to visit Sakuntala's family both on special occasions, such as weddings, and sometimes otherwise. With Sakuntala's brother she observed the *rakhi* ceremony, when Hindu brothers and sisters annually renew pledges of devotion and support to each other. Santara Bai thought that Sunita still preferred the previous family to her own. Sunita's birthmark had not faded.

Although in 1979 Santara Bai had told us that Sunita did not complain of headaches, in 1986 she said that Sunita "still complains of giddiness and headaches." We did not learn further details about these apparently new symptoms.

At her meeting in March 1990 with Prabhu Dayal, Dr. Pasricha learned that Sunita had married on July 8, 1989. Her husband was a law student. Sakuntala's family played a conspicuous part in the wedding. They contributed perhaps 50% of the costs of the bride's family and performed in the ceremonies a ritual ordinarily carried out by the bride's parents. Prabhu Dayal's older brother, Shrinath, also made a contribution toward the cost of the wedding, which indicated that he had adopted a positive attitude toward Sunita's claim to be Sakuntala reborn.

THE CASE OF DELLÂL BEYAZ

Summary of the Case and Its Investigation

Dellâl Beyaz was born in Samandağ, Turkey, in July 1970. Her parents were Ali Beyaz and his wife, Fatma. Ali Beyaz was a cultivator. He and his wife were Alevis, and Arabic was their mother tongue. Dellâl was the third daughter and seventh child among eight children that her parents had had up to the time the case developed.

Fatma Beyaz had a dream when she was pregnant with Dellâl, but her testimony concerning it varied on two different occasions. I shall describe what she said about it later.

More significantly, Dellâl was found soon after her birth to have a prominent birthmark at the back of her head (Figure 6-29).

Dellâl began to speak clearly when she was between the ages of 1 and 2. As soon as she could speak she began referring to a previous life, and during the next year she made a number of statements about it. She said that she was from Kavaslı. She stated the name of the person whose life she was recalling and the names of her husband and several of her children. She described how she had been on a roof hanging a washed jacket to dry when she fell and landed on her head on a concrete floor. When Dellâl was between 2 and 3 years old, she was demanding to be taken to Kavaslı.

Dellâl's parents had no connections with Kavaslı, and her mother later told me that at the time Dellâl was asking to be taken there she had no idea where it was. She added that she herself had never even been into Antakya, the large city of which Kavaslı is a suburb. Accordingly, Fatma and Ali Beyaz did nothing to verify Dellâl's statements. It happened, however, that one day a man, Ali Mehmet Köse, who lived near Kavaslı, came over to Samandağ to visit a friend who was a neighbor of the Beyaz family. From this friend Ali Mehmet Köse learned what Dellâl was saying about how she had died in the previous life, and he also heard about her birthmark. It occurred to him that Dellâl might be remembering the life of his aunt, Zehide Köse, who had fallen through a hole in a roof, landed on her head, and died of the injuries she received. Zehide had lived at Kavaslı, so what Dellâl was saying seemed to match her life closely.

Figure 6-29 Birthmark at top of Dellâl Beyaz's head as it appeared in September 1975, when she was 5 years old. The birthmark was an approximately round, hairless area somewhat resembling the scar of a wound. It was a little less than 1 centimeter in diameter.

Ali Mehmet Köse told his uncle, Ali Hasan Köse, and Ali Hasan's (and Zehide's) oldest daughter, Sabiha, about Dellâl. This stimulated Sabiha and her husband, Hasan Mehmet Köse, to go to Samandağ and visit Dellâl. Dellâl recognized Sabiha and answered correctly numerous questions about the life of Zehide that Sabiha put to her.

After this initial meeting between the two families, further visits were exchanged between them. Dellâl was taken to Kavaslı and made further recognitions there; and members of Zehide's family came to visit her at Samandağ.[36] Up to April 1975 Dellâl had been three times to Kavaslı, and members of Zehide Köse's family had visited her three times in Samandağ.

Reşat Bayer first learned of this case from an informant in Samandağ when he was there investigating other cases in April 1975. At that time he had a brief interview with Fatma Beyaz, Dellâl's mother. In September 1975, he and I contin-

[36]Sabiha Köse said that Dellâl was only about 1½ years old when she went to meet her in Samandağ. However, Ali Mehmet Köse, who was the first person in the Köse family to learn about the case, said that Dellâl was 2 when he heard about the case from his friend in Samandağ. Ali Hasan Köse thought that Dellâl had been approximately 2 years old when she had first come to Kavaslı, which was after Sabiha's first visit (with her husband) to Samandağ. Fatma Beyaz also said that Dellâl was 2 years old when she first went to Kavaslı. Among subjects of cases in which the two families had not been previously acquainted, she must have been one of the youngest at the time they first met.

ued the investigation of the case. We had a further interview with Dellâl's mother at which Dellâl's paternal grandmother was also present. We then interviewed three informants from Zehide Köse's family. We also at this time obtained a copy of the (extremely brief) medical records of the admission of Zehide Köse to the Government Hospital at Antakya and a somewhat longer medical report from the inquest into Zehide's death.

Reşat Bayer and I did not meet Dellâl or other informants for this case after 1975. However, in 1983 Dr. Can Polat, at my request, had a follow-up interview with Dellâl and also clarified some puzzling details.

In 1991 an informant directed Dr. Jürgen Keil to this case, and he began a fresh investigation of it. He met and interviewed Dellâl and her mother at considerable length before Dellâl's brother (who was also present during Dr. Keil's interviews) told him that I had investigated the case many years earlier. Dr. Keil did not meet any member of Zehide's family.

Persons Interviewed during the Investigation

In Samandağ we interviewed:

Dellâl Beyaz
Fatma Beyaz, Dellâl's mother
Elif Beyaz, Dellâl's paternal grandmother

In Kavaslı, Odabaşı, Antakya, we interviewed:

Ali Hasan Köse, Zehide Köse's husband
Sabiha Köse, Zehide and Ali Hasan Köse's oldest daughter
Hasan Mehmet Köse, Sabiha Köse's husband
Ali Mehmet Köse, Ali Hasan Köse's nephew

Dellâl's father, Ali Beyaz, was away from his home at the time of our investigation of this case, and I did not interview him.

The informants for this case spoke Turkish imperfectly, and Reşat Bayer had to obtain help at times from Arabic-speaking persons who were also competent in Turkish. I believe that some of the discrepancies in the testimony, which I shall mention later, arose from the difficulty the informants and interpreters had in finding a correct word in Turkish for what they wished to describe.

Relevant Facts of Geography and Possibilities for Normal Means of Communication between the Two Families

Samandağ is a large town nearly at the southern border of the Turkish province of Hatay. It is approximately 30 kilometers south of Antakya, which is the capital and second largest city of Hatay. Almost adjoining Antakya on its northern side is the large village of Odabaşı, and Kavaslı is a name given to the part of Odabaşı that lies on the eastern side of the Antakya-İskenderun highway.

Fatma Beyaz said that the two families concerned in this case had no knowledge of each other's existence before they met in connection with the case. I found quite credible her denial that she did not know where Kavaslı was and had never even visited Antakya before the case developed. (The women of the Arabic-speaking Alevis in that part of Turkey, although not completely house-bound, do not often travel away from the communities where they live, unless sometimes to work elsewhere in picking cotton or other harvesting.) Although I did not interview Fatma's husband, Dellâl's father, it is probable that he would have gone into Antakya from time to time for major shopping, since it is a much larger city than Samandağ.

Zehide's husband, Ali Hasan Köse, was a small shopkeeper. He said that he had no customers or relations in Samandağ and had never visited it before the case developed. His son-in-law Hasan Mehmet Köse and his nephew Ali Mehmet Köse similarly said that they had no relatives in Samandağ. As we have seen, Ali Mehmet Köse did have a friend in Samandağ, who lived near the Beyaz family; but Dellâl was already talking about the previous life at the time he went to visit this friend. He did not even meet Dellâl until the time of her second visit to Kavaslı.

Although I enquired about knowledge of Dellâl's family on the part of Ali Hasan Köse and his son and nephew, I failed to ask them whether Zehide had any relatives in Samandağ. In 1991 Dr. Keil learned from Fatma Beyaz that Zehide had had some relatives in Samandağ; and Fatma had known them, but had never met Zehide.

The two families concerned in the case lived in approximately equal social and economic conditions. Judging by their houses, I should think the Köse family was somewhat more prosperous than the Beyaz family. The physical distance between their communities—given the means of transportation in that part of Turkey—more than other factors makes it unlikely that they had ever known each other before the case developed.

The Life and Death of Zehide Köse

I learned almost nothing about Zehide's life before the fatal accident that ended it. She was born in 1914, the daughter of a man called Süleyman. When she grew up, she married Ali Hasan Köse and had 11 children, of whom nine survived to 1975. She and her husband started married life in a village, but they later moved to the center of Antakya and then to Kavaslı. They had been in a newly built house at Kavaslı for only 10 days when Zehide fell through a hole in the roof.

When I was at Kavaslı, Ali Hasan Köse showed me the place where the accident had occurred. The house had not been completely finished at the time he and his wife moved into it. An outside stairway gave access to the roof, which was a suitable place for hanging out laundry to dry. A rather large hole had been left in the roof, and it was intended to build an interior staircase from the floor below to the roof, which would be reached through this open hole. By the time of my visit the hole had been closed up, but I could see where it had been, and I estimate its dimensions as having been about three-quarters of a meter wide and rather more than a

meter long. It was certainly large enough for a person to fall through. At the time of Zehide's accident the hole had been covered with a thin sheet of iron. This could have kept the rain from falling on the floor below, but it could have borne no weight and might actually have made it difficult to remember that it covered a large hole. Be that as it may, on June 6, 1970, Zehide was on the roof hanging out a jacket she had washed when she fell through the hole in the roof. Probably she forgot that the hole was behind her and stepped back onto the iron sheet, which yielded under her weight and let her fall through. Just how her body pitched as it fell down is a matter of conjecture. As she developed a large bruise above her right eye, that part of her head may have struck the edge of the opening in the concrete as she fell through the hole. I estimated the distance between the roof on which Zehide had been standing and the floor of concrete to which she fell below as between 3.5 and 4 meters. The doctor who examined her body later found a bruise on one loin, and this part of her body may have touched the concrete first, followed almost immediately by the collision of her head with the floor.

Zehide's husband was not at home when the accident occurred, but a boy saw it and quickly ran to fetch Zehide's daughter Sabiha. She came quickly and found her mother unconscious and groaning. She noted a wound above her right eye and another at the top of her head. Shortly thereafter Zehide's husband came to the scene of the accident and transported his wife to the Government Hospital in Antakya. He later disqualified himself as a firsthand witness of the injuries on his wife's body.

For these we can turn next to the records of the hospital and of the inquest into the accident.

The Records of Zehide's Hospital Admission. The hospital records were sketchy, but they included the following statements, which I have slightly rearranged to make them more coherent. They were dictated by a doctor the day after Zehide's death.

> The patient fell from a balcony. She could not speak. She was vomiting. The eyes were swollen, and there was an ecchymosis over the right eyebrow.
> Cause of death: Cerebral hemorrhage or head injury.

The report did not mention a wound at the top or back of the head.

The medical report filed with the inquest conducted by the procurator's office contained the same information and little more. It mentioned:

> 1. A large hematoma of the right eye.
> 2. A skin-deep wound of the left eyebrow sewn with one suture.
> 3. An ecchymotic area about the size of a fist in the right loin.
> 4. Abrasion of the skin of the right wrist.
>
> Cause of death: Cerebral hemorrhage subsequent to injuries on the head...

The cause of death being so obvious, the pathologist saw no need to perform a detailed autopsy.

According to the hospital records, Zehide Köse died on June 7, 1970, the day after the accident and her admission to the hospital.[37] She was about 56 years old.

An Announcing Dream

In April 1975 Fatma Beyaz told Reşat Bayer (during his first, preliminary interview with her) that before Dellâl was born she had dreamed that her baby had come from the village of Kavaslı. However, when she reviewed this dream a few months later with Reşat Bayer and me (on September 28, 1975), she denied that the person appearing in the dream had said that she was from Kavaslı. After the withdrawal of this detail nothing relevant to the case remained of the dream. Fatma Beyaz showed a strange reluctance to talk about the dream, almost as if she were ashamed of having had it. I thought that her husband might have clarified this matter, but he was not available.

Statements and Recognitions Made by Dellâl

In Table 6-9 I have listed first the statements (items 1-13) that Fatma Beyaz said Dellâl made before the two families met. For several of these I have listed Sabiha Köse as a corroborator, because she said that Dellâl repeated them to her when she first went to Samandağ to meet her.

Fatma Beyaz's mother-in-law, Elif Beyaz, was present throughout our long interview with Fatma on September 28, 1975. She did not intervene during the interview, but when it was over I asked her whether, having listened to everything that Fatma had said, she wished to add or subtract anything. She said that she wished to do neither, and I took this to mean that she agreed with what Fatma had said. I have not, however, listed her in the table as an additional informant, because I do not know how well informed she was.

Item 14 (Dellâl's recognition of Sabiha Köse) occurred when Sabiha first visited Dellâl at Samandağ. Item 15 occurred at the time of Dellâl's first visit to Kavaslı. Because it was introduced by a cueing question, I regard it as almost worthless, although Dellâl's shyness on seeing Zehide's husband was certainly an appropriate response toward someone whom she regarded as her husband. Item 16 also occurred at the time of Dellâl's first visit to Kavaslı.

[37]When I went to the cemetery in Antakya to verify for myself that Zehide had been buried under an olive tree, which was true (item 13, Table 6-9), I found that her gravestone recorded her year of death as 1971, not 1970. I discussed this error with her husband, Ali Hasan Köse. The error on the gravestone probably arose in the following way. It sometimes happens in Turkey that a family cannot afford a gravestone at the time of a burial, or for some other reason the members postpone erecting one until some time later. Zehide's gravestone had the year 1972 cut into its base and this presumably was the year of its erection. When the stonecutter had asked Ali Hasan Köse when his wife had died, he may carelessly have said: "Last year" without realizing that it was then the year before last. The stonecutter then chiselled "1971" instead of "1970."

Table 6-9 **Summary of Statements and Recognitions Made by Dellâl**

Item	*Informants*	*Verification*	*Comments*
1. Her name was Zehide.	Fatma Beyaz, Dellâl's mother Sabiha Köse, Zehide Köse's oldest daughter	Ali Hasan Köse, Zehide Köse's husband	
2. She was from Kavaslı.	Fatma Beyaz	Ali Hasan Köse	
3. Her husband was called Ali.	Fatma Beyaz Sabiha Köse	Ali Hasan Köse	
4. She had a son called Süleyman.	Fatma Beyaz Sabiha Köse	Sabiha Köse	
5. She had a son called Adnan.	Fatma Beyaz	Sabiha Köse	
6. She had a daughter called Zahiba.	Fatma Beyaz	Sabiha Köse	The correct name of this daughter is Sabiha. I had written it correctly on an earlier page of notes, and I believe that the error here is due to a slip on the part of Reşat Bayer or myself.
7. She had a daughter called Semire.	Fatma Beyaz	Sabiha Köse	
8. She had a daughter called Mediha.	Fatma Beyaz	Sabiha Köse	

Table 6-9 *(continued)*

Item	*Informants*	*Verification*	*Comments*
9. She was hanging a jacket on the laundry line on a balcony when she fell.	Fatma Beyaz	Ali Hasan Köse	Zehide Köse had been hanging out laundry on the roof of a house, not a balcony. An error of translation may have occurred here. See text for discussion.
10. She fell onto some concrete.	Fatma Beyaz	Ali Hasan Köse In 1975 I saw the concrete floor onto which Zehide had fallen.	
11. She landed on her head.	Fatma Beyaz	Sabiha Köse	I cannot say that Zehide first struck the concrete floor with her head. However, her head certainly struck the floor forcefully.
12. She called to Nehla.	Fatma Beyaz	Unverified	Nehla has not been identified; see text for discussion.
13. She was buried under an olive tree.	Fatma Beyaz	I verified this detail myself by going to the grave of Zehide Köse, which was in a grove of olive trees along with other graves.	Dellâl made this statement in response to a question her mother asked her. The statement shows knowledge of events after Zehide's death.
14. Recognition of Sabiha Köse	Sabiha Köse		When Sabiha Köse went to visit Dellâl at her home in Samandağ, she asked Dellâl: "Who am I?" Dellâl replied: "You are Sabiha."
15. Recognition of Ali Hasan Köse, Zehide's husband	Ali Hasan Köse		This occurred at the home of Sabiha Köse on the occasion of Dellâl's first visit there.

		When Ali Hasan Köse entered the house, someone asked Dellâl where her husband was. Dellâl became embarrassed and partly hid her head while she pointed at Ali Hasan with her finger.
16. Recognition of Süleyman Köse, Zehide's oldest son	Fatma Beyaz Ali Hasan Köse	This occurred at the time of Dellâl's first visit to Kavaslı. It impressed Fatma Beyaz, because Süleyman had his back turned toward Dellâl when someone pointed to him and asked her who he was. Dellâl replied, before Süleyman turned around: "That is my son Süleyman." Ali Hasan Köse gave a different account of how Dellâl recognized Süleyman. He said that she was asked: "Who is Süleyman" and correctly pointed to him. Both informants agreed that Dellâl had recognized Süleyman at the time of her first visit to Kavaslı. She may well have pointed out Süleyman twice. Unfortunately, I do not know whether the occasion that Fatma described occurred before the one Ali Hasan mentioned. If the former occurred first, it would have offered evidence of a paranormal process; the value of the later occasion might have been vitiated by cues from persons present.

I was told of other recognitions that Dellâl had made in Kavaslı. As reported by Ali Hasan Köse, some of these were stimulated by questions that gave cues, like the one that invited Dellâl to recognize him and Süleyman, for example: "Who is Mediha?" About other recognitions, such as of persons in photographs whom Dellâl was said to have recognized, I learned insufficient details. I therefore have not included any other recognitions in the table.

I learned of one person Dellâl did not recognize. This was Ali Mehmet Köse, the man of Zehide's family who had first learned about Dellâl's claims to be Zehide reborn. He had met Dellâl at the time of her second visit to Kavaslı and said that she had not recognized him.

Dellâl employed a pertinent expression in recognizing Ali Hasan Köse when he came to Samandağ to see her. She had already met him once in Kavaslı (item 15, Table 6-9) so the fact of recognizing him in Samandağ was not remarkable, but her manner of doing so perhaps was. When he went to see her, he brought her a dress and some jewelry. After giving her these gifts, he asked her who had brought them to her. She replied: "Abu Süleyman." The Arabic word *abu* means "father of," and, when attached to the name of a man's oldest son, it commonly becomes the name by which the man becomes known after the birth of this son. Zehide and Ali Hasan Köse's oldest son was Süleyman, and thus her use of the expression was correct (even though not specific), given her conviction that she was Zehide Köse, Ali Hasan Köse's wife and Süleyman's mother.

Some confusion occurred in statements about the place from which Zehide had fallen. Fatma Beyaz used the Turkish word *balkon* ("balcony") in telling Reşat Bayer (in April 1975) what Dellâl had said about the way she had died in the previous life. Ali Hasan Köse said that Dellâl had said that she had fallen from the roof of the house at Kavaslı when she showed fear upon being taken there at the age of about 2. (I describe her reaction at that time later.) In September 1975, Dellâl herself used the word *roof* in going over details with Reşat Bayer and me; but by then she had visited the house at Kavaslı and could have learned normally that Zehide had fallen from a roof. The word *balcony* also got into the notes made by the doctor who examined Zehide at the Government Hospital in Antakya. It is possible—although I have not confirmed this—that the Arabic-speaking informants for the case were unable to distinguish verbally an open roof and a balcony.

In September 1975 Reşat Bayer engaged Dellâl in a short conversation about her memories of the previous life. She repeated some of the essential details of how Zehide had died and gave several names of members of Zehide's family. This review showed that at least some of her memories were persisting up to her age at that time—about 5 years.

Dellâl's Behavior Related to the Previous Life

Circumstances and Manner of Dellâl's Speaking about the Previous Life. According to Fatma Beyaz, Dellâl began to refer to the previous life as soon as she could speak. She said the name *Nehla* and seemed to be addressing

someone with that name. She talked to herself and was heard to say: "Nehla, go and tell Sabiha that her mother has died." As she said this, she tried to scoop a hole in the earth. When Fatma Beyaz heard Dellâl speaking in this way, she asked her how she had died (in the presumed previous life), and Dellâl told her how she had fallen down while hanging up a jacket to be dried.[38]

I did not learn of later circumstances associated with Dellâl's speaking about the previous life. Between the ages of 2 and 3, she was asking to be taken to Kavaslı where she wanted to see her daughter.

Dellâl's Expression of Emotion on Meeting Members of Zehide's Family. When Dellâl met members of Zehide's family, she showed strong emotions. When Sabiha Köse first came over to Samandağ to meet Dellâl, she (Dellâl) cried so much that she could not eat some cake that Sabiha had brought her. (Sabiha also cried at this first meeting.) When Dellâl met Zehide's children at Kavaslı, she hugged them.

Dellâl's Fears. When I asked Fatma Beyaz whether Dellâl had any unusual fears, she at first replied in the negative. In response then to a leading question about fear of heights, she said that Dellâl did show fear when she went up on a roof. (The roofs of many houses in that part of Turkey are flat and have no guard rail at their edges.)

When Dellâl was first taken to Kavaslı, she had told her parents that she wished to go to the house of Zehide's daughter Sabiha, and she went there first. Afterward, she was brought to Zehide's house, where Ali Hasan Köse was still living. Here she was reluctant to go into the house and cried. She said that she had fallen from its roof and died.

The Attitude of the Adults Concerned toward Dellâl's Memories

The adults of both families seem to have encouraged Dellâl to speak about the previous life when she wished to do so. However, her family made no effort to verify her statements about a previous life, and they only learned of their accuracy

[38]Reşat Bayer and I obtained a complete list of Zehide's children, and Nehla was not one of them. It occurred to me later that Nehla might have been a neighbor's child who happened to be present when Zehide fell through the hole in the roof. Unfortunately, we had failed to ask the Köse family whether they could identify anyone called Nehla in relation to Zehide.

In 1983 Dr. Polat learned from Dellâl herself that Nehla was the daughter of Zehide's brother-in-law. (This information would probably derive from Dellâl's normally acquired knowledge.) Dellâl could not remember whether Nehla had in fact been present when Zehide fell through the roof, and we have not inquired about this from the Köse family.

When Zehide fell from the roof and her head hit the concrete floor below, she must have lost consciousness instantly, and she never regained it before she died. There was thus no question of her speaking the words: "Nehla, go and tell Sabiha that her mother has died." However, such a thought might well have been in the mind of the injured Zehide.

The previous personality's last words or last thoughts or an event occurring just before death sometimes figure in the subject's statements. Examples occurred in the cases of Imad Elawar and Zouheir Chaar. I give additional examples in the report of Sunita Khandelwal's case.

through the chance visit of a member of the Köse family of Kavaslı to their neighbors. Later, the case received no publicity, and Reşat Bayer would never have heard about it if he had not been in Samandağ for the investigation of other cases.

Dellâl's Birthmark

Figure 6-29 shows Dellâl's birthmark in September 1975, when she was a little over 5 years old. The birthmark was a round, hairless area almost in the center of the top of her head. It was a little less than 1 centimeter in diameter. In appearance it resembled the scar of a healed wound. It was red when Dellâl was born, but was not bleeding or oozing. No one else in the family had a similar birthmark.

In infancy and early childhood Dellâl sometimes acted as if she felt discomfort or pain at the site of the birthmark. Her mother noted that when she was placed on her back, so that the birthmark would be against the bed, she turned herself on her side. She also sometimes complained of pain in her head and in her throat. At the time of our interview in September 1975, when Dellâl was asked how she had died, she pointed toward her throat. (This may, however, have been a poorly aimed indication of her head.) Her general health was then good.

Comment. Although Sabiha Köse said that she had noticed a wound on the top of her mother's head, the medical records that I examined did not mention a wound there. It seems almost certain that the doctors examining the injured Zehide would have looked at the head with a view to learning how she had become unconscious. Both medical reports attributed her death to head injuries. However, the injury to the brain was the important lesion from the perspective of the doctors, and they might have felt no need to record an abrasion on the scalp.

Comments on the Evidence of Paranormal Processes in the Case

None of the persons concerned in this case seem to have had any reason either to suppress it or to exaggerate it. It involved no murder or scandal, and there were no gulfs of wealth or caste of the kind that sometimes separate the concerned families in cases of India. I have seldom investigated a case less complicated than this one with regard to possible motives for distorting the testimony in it.

The uneducated villagers of south central Turkey have notoriously unreliable memories for dates. Still, there is no reason to think that Dellâl's mother would have been more than a month off in her statement that Dellâl was born in July 1970. We can be certain from the medical records that Zehide died on June 7, 1970. This means that Dellâl was born within a few weeks, perhaps even within a few days, of Zehide's death. If we decide that reincarnation is the best interpretation of the case, we shall have to suppose that the injury to Zehide's head somehow affected Dellâl's fetal body not long before her birth. A short interval between the previous personality's death and the subject's birth has occurred in other cases of which I give a list in Table 14-2.

Dellâl's Later Development

In May 1983, Dr. Polat met Dellâl in Samandağ for a follow-up interview with her. She was then almost 13 years old. She had completed primary school and was staying at home, unemployed.

Dellâl said that her memories of the previous life had not faded. However, she had not spoken about them spontaneously for many years—since the age of 3, she thought. She sometimes spoke about the previous life when she met members of Zehide Köse's family or when other persons asked her questions about it. She still remembered, in particular, the pain in Zehide's throat when she fell from the roof.

Dellâl said that she no longer had the fears she had felt and shown when younger.

She continued to exchange visits with the Köse family. They rather than she initiated such visits, but she apparently welcomed them as much as they. A visit between the families had occurred 4 months before Dr. Polat's interview.

Although in most cases visits between the fwo families concerned attenuate and usually cease after a few years, this did not happen in Dellâl's case. Dr. Keil learned in 1991 that Dellâl (who was then 21 years old) was still visiting Zehide's family about twice a year. Early in 1991 Dellâl had attended the wedding of one of Zehide's daughters, Semire. At this time Dellâl was calling herself Zehide, but Dr. Keil did not learn when she had begun to do this. No informant had told me that Dellâl had asked to be called Zehide when she was a young child.

Comment. The encouragement of Dellâl's expression of her memories by both families concerned and the continuing visits between them had probably tended to keep Dellâl's memories fresh. However, it is also possible that she had lost the original imaged memories of the previous life, or some of them, and replaced these with memories both of what others had said she had earlier said and of normally acquired information. It is exceedingly difficult to distinguish the different sources of apparent memories in a child of Dellâl's age at the time Dr. Polat met her (Stevenson, 1974b).

THE CASE OF WILFRED MEARES

Summary of the Case and Its Investigation

Wilfred Meares was born on November 22, 1961, in Prince Rupert, British Columbia, Canada. His parents were Franklin Black and his wife, Ruby Meares Zuboff. They were Haidas. Wilfred was the only child of his parents. Ruby was only 17 at the time of Wilfred's birth; he was her first child, and her labor lasted 23 hours. Wilfred was born about 2 weeks postmaturely. Almost immediately after his birth his mother noticed a prominent birthmark at the back of his head (Figure 6-30).

Soon after Wilfred's birth his parents separated. When he was still quite young, his mother married a white man and thus forfeited her rights as a native

Figure 6-30 Birthmark on the head of Wilfred Meares as it appeared in May 1974, when he was 12½ years old. The birthmark was a hairless area approximately 2 centimeters long and 5 millimeters wide. It somewhat resembled the scar of a healed wound.

(Indian) in Canada. Wilfred was then adopted, at least unofficially, by Ruby's father, Henry Meares; and he was given his grandfather's surname.

When Wilfred was about 2 years old, he made two statements—and apparently no more—about a previous life.

The informant who first told me about the case directed me for information about it to the subject's maternal grandfather, Henry Meares. I interviewed him at Prince Rupert on May 28, 1974. He had been much impressed by the correspondence between the birthmark on the back of Wilfred's head and the wound on the back of the head that his brother-in-law Victor Smart had received when he was killed in an automobile accident during the summer before Wilfred's birth.

After learning from Henry Meares what he could tell me about the case, I met and talked (in Prince Rupert) with Wilfred Meares himself (then a youth of 12) and with his mother, Ruby Meares Zuboff. I had wished to interview also Henry Meares's wife, Wendy Smart Meares, who was Victor Smart's sister; but she was indisposed at the time of my investigation.

In June 1975 I had another interview with Ruby Meares Zuboff in Prince Rupert, but was again unsuccessful in meeting Wendy Smart Meares and two other informants I had hoped to interview for the case.

The Life, Death, and Character of Victor Smart

Victor Smart was born on May 15, 1924, in Masset, Queen Charlotte Islands. He was a Haida. He married Henrietta Bennett and they had eight children. They lived on the Queen Charlotte Islands.

Victor drank alcohol excessively, as did his wife. They had the habit of becoming intoxicated with alcohol on weekends, but they were responsible enough to see that their children were looked after while they were incapacitated. Victor's niece, Ruby, willingly cared for their children at these times and thus endeared herself to Victor. Sometimes when he was drunk, but not when he was sober, he told her that he would be reborn as her son.

Ruby Meares Zuboff recalled to me that Victor had always been a polite drinker. Unlike some alcoholics, he had never seized other persons' drinks or taken a drink without being offered one; she found this amiable trait repeated in her son, Wilfred, as I shall describe later.

Apart from his excessive drinking I learned of only one other distinctive trait in Victor. Unfortunately, it proved a fatal disadvantage for him. When he traveled in the front seat of an automobile that he was not driving, he placed his back against the front door, so that his face and trunk faced the driver. In this position he could not see the road ahead of the automobile and any approaching dangers.

On July 11, 1961, his wife asked him to take a friend who was pregnant to the hospital. This meant driving from Masset to Queen Charlotte City. Victor appears to have accepted this assignment with some reluctance, but under pressure from his wife he assented. He set off with some friends to drive to the hospital. He was not driving, but sitting in the front seat of the car with his back as usual against the front door opposite the driver. The driver lost control of the car, and a horrendous crash occurred in which three persons, including Victor Smart, were killed. The door against which Victor Smart was leaning opened at the time of the impact, and he was ejected from the car onto the highway and died instantly. His body was taken to the hospital at Queen Charlotte City, where an autopsy was performed. Henry Meares, Victor's brother-in-law, was summoned by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police to identify Victor's body. He remarked that Victor had been shot out of the car so rapidly that one of his shoes had come off and remained in the car. The police drew his attention to a wound at the back of Victor's head and said that it was the only wound that Victor had. In fact, this was not true because the postmortem examination (which I shall cite) mentioned other wounds. Henry Meares realized this possibility himself, and he told me that there might well have been other wounds; but he had only noticed the one at the back of Victor's head. He also remembered that "the doctor" (not further identified, but presumably the physician who had the duty of pronouncing Victor Smart dead) had said that Victor Smart had been killed by a wound at the back of the head.

Nevertheless, the pathologist who performed the autopsy did not mention such a wound in his report. I obtained a copy of the autopsy report from the

Queen Charlotte Islands General Hospital. The following are relevant extracts from the report:

> There was a good deal of dried blood over the face and filling the right ear. The distal portion of the tongue was dangling outside the mouth, held by a thin shred of tissue....There was an obvious fracture at the base of the skull with false motion at the atlas odontoid articular area....Fractures of the left wrist and the fifth to ninth ribs...multiple lacerations and abrasions.
>
> Cause of Death
>
> 1. Fracture cervical spine
> 2. Transection of tongue
> 3. Hemorrhage with shock

The fracture of Victor Smart's neck must have killed him almost instantly (by crushing his brain stem).

For the cervical fracture to occur, his head must have struck the pavement with great force. A wound was said to have occurred at the site of contact between his head and the pavement. Henry Meares said that the police noticed this wound and drew it to his attention and that a doctor who discussed the cause of death with him also mentioned it. However, from the perspective of the pathologist writing a report to describe the immediate causes of death, a wound at the back of Victor's head might have been just one more of several "lacerations and abrasions," and there would have been no reason for him to single it out for special mention in his report. Indeed, he might not even have noticed it as it would have been covered with hair. (In the cases of Dellâl Beyaz and Sunita Khandelwal, the medical reports of the injuries of Zehide Köse and Sakuntala [respectively] also did not mention an abrasion on the head.)

Victor Smart was approximately 37 years old when he died.

Announcing Dreams

Ruby Meares Zuboff told me that when she was pregnant with Wilfred, "my uncle kept coming to me." More particularly, she had two dreams about Victor Smart at this time; one about a month before Wilfred's birth and one when she was in labor to give birth to Wilfred. In these dreams Victor Smart appeared smiling and standing before Ruby. He said nothing and then walked away.

Wilfred's Statements about the Previous Life

Wilfred's early development was normal. He began walking and, according to his mother, "running around" when he was 9 months old, and he was talking at 11 months.

He was 2 years old when he made the only two statements by which he referred to the previous life. He was with his mother and a cousin, who was one of

Victor Smart's children. They were picking berries. The cousin happened to express a wish that she might die soon or "die young like my father." (Ruby Meares Zuboff seemed a little vague about just what words the cousin had used in expressing a wish to die young.) When Wilfred heard her say this, he said: "Don't say that. I died young too." The others around him then asked him how he had died, and he replied: "I got killed in a car, but I came back." Ruby Meares Zuboff commented: "That gave us a funny feeling."

Wilfred said nothing more about the previous life, and when I met him in 1974, he said that he had no memories whatever of the previous life.

Wilfred's Behavior Related to the Previous Life

Wilfred showed an unusual fondness for the family of Victor Smart. He wanted to be with Victor Smart's children, and when they came to visit their aunt Wendy Smart Meares (who was also Wilfred's grandmother and foster mother), he was happy to see them when they arrived and annoyed when, at the end of their visit, they were sent home. He also showed great solicitude for Victor Smart's father, Cyrus Smart. Once when Ruby Meares Zuboff moved away from the Queen Charlotte Islands, she asked Wilfred whether he would like to leave also, and he said: "Who will look after Chimy?" using the familiar name of his great-grandfather, Cyrus Smart, who was Victor Smart's father. Ruby Meares Zuboff said of his attachment to Victor Smart's family: "It was as if he belonged to them instead of to me."

Toward Victor's wife, Henrietta, Wilfred showed varying responses. When, still an infant, he first saw Henrietta, he cried, and Ruby Meares Zuboff interpreted this as an expression of joy on seeing Henrietta. As he was not yet speaking, this was only an inference. Henry Meares noted that when Wilfred was older, he seemed indifferent to Henrietta, an attitude that contrasted with his warm affection for the children of Victor and Henrietta. Victor and Henrietta had been happily married; but Henry Meares—also using inference only—thought that Wilfred might have had a submerged animosity toward Henrietta for urging him to make the journey to the hospital during which Victor Smart was killed.

Wilfred had no phobia of motor vehicles.

He had a precocious appetite for alcohol. When he was between 3 and 4, he would stay around adults who were drinking and expectantly wait for one of them to offer him a drink, which some of them did. He would continue drinking as long as he was offered more.[39] At some point Ruby Meares Zuboff tried to put a stop to this habit.

She noted that, like Victor Smart, Wilfred never took anyone's drink without permission. He always waited patiently until he was offered a drink.

[39]Other subjects who remembered the previous lives of heavy consumers of alcohol and who as children showed a precocious interest in it include Bishen Chand Kapoor, Sujith Lakmal Jayaratne, Maung Zaw Thein Lwin, Maung Tin Win, Erkan Kılıç, Maung Myint Tin, and Muhittin Yılmaz.

Ruby Meares Zuboff's attempts to stop Wilfred from drinking alcohol were unsuccessful. At the time of my second meeting with her in 1975, she told me that Wilfred (who was then 13) had been drinking alcohol and, what was in her view worse, had broken into an automobile in order to obtain some. This had led to his being put on probation by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

Wilfred's Birthmark

Wilfred's birthmark (Figure 6-30) was (in 1974) a hairless area in the occipital region of his head about 1 centimeter to the right of the midline. It was a little less than 2 centimeters long and about 5 millimeters wide. It resembled the scar of a healed wound.

Ruby Meares Zuboff said that she had noticed the birthmark as soon as the baby was brought to her. (Because of her exhaustion after her prolonged labor, she was not given the baby until the 3rd day after her delivery.) She said that a kind of "green pus" oozed from the birthmark until Wilfred was about 8 weeks old, when the area healed up.

Henry Meares recalled that his daughter showed him Wilfred's birthmark soon after Wilfred's birth. She asked him its significance, and he then said that "the doctor figured that Victor Smart was killed by a wound there." (In his interview with me, Henry Meares said that on hearing this Ruby had told him about her dreams of Victor Smart.)

No one else in the family had a birthmark like Wilfred's. Nor did Wilfred have any other birthmarks.

Because part of Victor Smart's tongue had been almost severed at the time of his fatal accident and his neck had been broken, I enquired about whether Wilfred had had any symptoms of disease in the neck or tongue and learned that he had had none. His mother said that he did seem to be "weak in the legs," and sometimes he collapsed at the knees and fell down. I could see no obvious connection between this symptom and the life or death of Victor Smart. Ruby Meares Zuboff herself thought that Wilfred might have inherited this trait from his father, who had a similar tendency to fall down.

7

Birthmarks Corresponding to Surgical Wounds and Other Skin Lesions on Deceased Persons

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter I turn from cases in which a violent death occurred to those in which a subject had a birthmark that corresponded to a surgical wound or other nonviolent lesion of the skin. The wounds—whether surgical or other—usually occurred shortly before the previous personality's death. However, one (that in the case of Maung Nyunt Win) occurred some years before death. In another case (Jacinta Agbo), the death was caused by violence, but the birthmark corresponded to a feature of a related surgical operation.

This work contains reports of other cases in which surgical operations figure that I have thought better placed in later chapters. For example, I have included the case of Ma Choe Hnin Htet in Chapter 10 (The Prediction of Birthmarks); and I have placed that of Corliss Chotkin, Jr. in Chapter 12 (Correspondences of Details between Birthmarks and Related Wounds or Other Marks on Deceased Persons).

CASE REPORTS

THE CASE OF SUSAN WILSON

Introduction

Like several other cases in this volume, this one has few data: a dream, a birthmark, and some behavior appropriate for the woman of whom Susan Wilson was the presumed reincarnation. I am satisfied, however, that the subject's birthmark corresponded closely in location with a surgical wound on the deceased person concerned.

Summary of the Case and Its Investigation

Susan Wilson was born in Sitka, Alaska, on September 5, 1940. Her parents were Fred Lobanov and his wife Frances, who were both full-blooded Tlingits. Fred Lobanov was a Presbyterian minister; he also worked as a teacher and was, like most Tlingit men, a seasonal fisherman. Susan was the first of her parents' eight children. Her mother noted the birthmark on her left chest soon after her birth. At the time of her birth Susan was identified as the reincarnation of Susan Ford, a young girl who had died 6 years earlier from pneumonia that was evidently complicated by pleurisy or empyema.

I first learned about this case on a visit to Sitka, Alaska, in April 1963. My informant was Frances Lobanov. Later in the same month I met Susan Wilson in Juneau and examined her birthmark (Figure 7-1). She and her mother were my only informants for the case. I had further interviews about the case with Frances Lobanov in 1972 and 1978, each time in Sitka. In the meantime, Susan Wilson had moved from Alaska to Minnesota, and I did not meet her again until 1978. In that year I met her in Duluth, Minnesota, where she was then living. I took the photograph of Figure 7-1 in 1978. It replaces a sketch of the birthmark that I had made when I first met Susan Wilson in 1963.

Susan Ford's father, Walter Ford, was still living in Sitka when I began investigating this case, but I never met him. (I have no note to explain why I did not meet him.) In 1975 Ms. Roxanne Turner (who was working for me in Alaska) tried to meet him in Sitka, but he was not available during her visit there.

The Life and Death of Susan Ford

Susan Ford was the daughter of Walter and Katherine Ford; she was born in Juneau on September 30, 1910. Katherine Ford died soon after Susan Ford's birth; her husband then remarried, and Susan was raised by her stepmother, Rosemary Ford. Susan had a single brother, Jimmy. Her father and stepmother also had at least two children, because Susan Wilson mentioned two stepbrothers (of Susan Ford) to me. Susan Ford's family were also Tlingits.

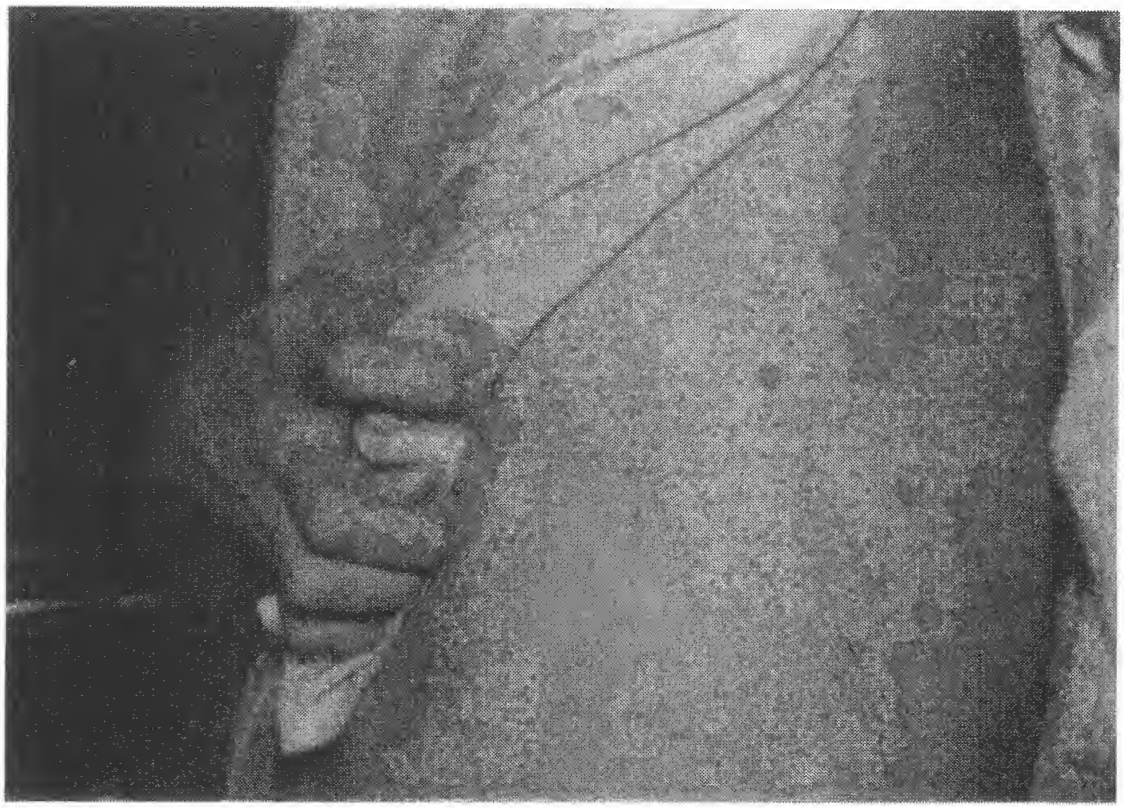

Figure 7-1 Hyperpigmented macule on the left chest of Susan Wilson as it appeared in November 1978, when she was 38 years old. The birthmark was at about the level of the sixth rib and near the lateral midline of the chest. It was approximately 3 centimeters by 2 centimeters.

The parents of Susan Ford were both related to those of Susan Wilson. Susan Wilson's father, Fred Lobanov, was a cousin of Susan Ford's father, Walter Ford; and her mother, Frances Lobanov, was a cousin of Susan Ford's mother, Katherine.

When Susan Ford was just over 24 years old, she became ill with pneumonia, and after a short illness she died on November 2, 1934, in a hospital in Anchorage. She was unmarried.

According to the death certificate, the cause of her death was "lobular pneumonia." Frances Lobanov said that Susan Ford had had pleurisy and a surgical drainage of her chest. (Presumably pleural fluid or an empyema were drained off at that time.) Susan Ford died within a few days at most of the pleural drainage. The death certificate stated that she had been ill for only 6 days.

Frances Lobanov had not herself seen the chest wound of the operation for drainage on Susan Ford, but she said that Susan Ford's father, Walter, had said that Susan Wilson's birthmark corresponded to the operative wound on his daughter. She told me that Rosemary Ford had also testified to this correspondence.

I tried to obtain a report of Susan Ford's last illness from the hospital where she had died. Unfortunately, this hospital had merged with another one, and records farther back than 10 years had been destroyed.

The Main Features of the Case

When Frances Lobanov was pregnant with Susan, a member of the Ford family—I never learned who—dreamed of Susan Ford and, connecting this dream with the baby Frances was going to have, advised her, if she had a girl, to name the baby Susan.[1] Susan's parents appear to have ignored this advice initially because her birth certificate records her name as Margaret. Soon, however, Walter Ford came around to examine the baby, and on noticing the correspondence in location between the baby's birthmark and the operative wound on Susan Ford's chest, he named the baby Susan. Her family accepted this proposal, and although Susan's name was never officially changed, she was thereafter always called Susan.

When Susan Wilson became able to speak, she drew attention to the birthmark on her left chest, but her mother, Frances Lobanov, could not remember (in 1972) what she had said when pointing to the birthmark. She did not remember whether Susan had ever referred to Susan Ford's last illness and operation.

When I met Susan Wilson for the first time, she was 22 years old and remembered nothing about the previous life, although she did remember her strong attachment to Walter and Rosemary Ford.

When Susan was young, she addressed Walter Ford as "Dad" and sometimes as "Big Pappa," distinguishing him thus from her father, whom she called "Pop." She called Rosemary Ford "Mom" or "Big Momma." She was always delighted to see the Fords; her mother described her as "excited" when she met them. When Susan was still a young child, Walter and Rosemary Ford adopted a girl. Susan became angry at this and said that they should have adopted her instead. Her mother thought that she showed less interest in the Fords after this episode of what she obviously regarded as disloyalty to her, but she nevertheless continued to be friendly with them.

In her interviews with me Susan Wilson remembered clearly her attachment to the Fords. She recalled that when she had been younger and would bake something, she would take some of whatever she cooked and give it to Walter Ford. When the fishing boats came into the dock at Sitka, where she grew up, she would go down to the dock and ask her father whether he or Walter Ford had caught the most fish. She had no interest whatever in the size of the other fishermen's catches. Susan also recalled that when one of the Fords had to go into the hospital, she felt a concern about them that she could not explain from her present relations with them. She also felt especially fond of Susan Ford's only full brother, Jimmy. However, she also became fond of Susan's stepbrothers, the sons of Walter and Rosemary Ford.

[1]Frances Lobanov gave me this account of the announcing dream in 1978. In 1963 she had told me that no dream had occurred before Susan's birth. This discrepancy may have been due to Frances's having taken my question to refer only to any dream that she herself may have had; or she may later have remembered a dream that she had earlier forgotten.

The Fords for their part were affectionate toward Susan, whom they regarded as their daughter reborn.

Susan Wilson told me of two features of her own behavior which she thought she had in common with Susan Ford. (I did not learn about these from Susan's mother, Frances Lobanov, and Susan's statements have no confirmation from other informants.) First, she said that she was a very active person, and she understood that Susan Ford had also had this feature of temperament. Second, she had a strong interest in music. She started to learn the piano, but later gave it up. She sang in the choir of her high school. In later life she wished that she had maintained and developed her ability to play the piano. Susan Ford had been a skillful piano player.

Susan Wilson's Birthmark

Susan Wilson's birthmark (Figure 7-1) was a large hyperpigmented macule. It was located near the lateral midline of the left chest at the level of the lower margin of her left breast. In shape it was irregularly rectangular and measured approximately 3 centimeters by 2 centimeters. When Susan stretched her skin by leaning a little to the right, the birthmark became more or less round in shape. It was moderately heavily pigmented. It was neither raised above nor lower than the surrounding skin and was not puckered.

In 1978 Susan Wilson told me that she thought the birthmark had been more posterior on her chest when she had been younger. She said that she used to have more trouble seeing it than she did in 1978.

She had suffered from a dull aching pain in the left chest anteriorly. She localized this ache below her left breast, near the site of the birthmark but not directly at it. This pain had persisted up to 1963. When young she had not had pneumonia or pleurisy, but she did suffer from rheumatic fever for 3 years. In 1977 she was ill with pneumonia.

Susan Wilson said that no other member of her family had a birthmark at the site of hers. Her youngest daughter, Jean, had a prominent hyperpigmented nevus (which I examined) on her left back near the midline. Jean had been identified, almost entirely on the basis of behavioral resemblances, as the reincarnation of her mother's grandmother. This was Matilda Wright, who was Frances Lobanov's mother. (In 1965 I had met Matilda Wright, a venerable Tlingit matriarch, when she was 90 years old and a patient in the Native Hospital at Mt. Edgecumbe, Alaska.) Susan Wilson did not know whether Matilda Wright had had a nevus or other mark on her body at the site of Jean's birthmark.

Susan's birthmark was on the skin over her left lung, a site for surgical drainage of a pleural effusion or empyema secondary to pneumonia.

Susan Wilson's Attitude toward Her Case

Susan Wilson received an education beyond that of most members of her family. Whether for this reason or other reasons, she did not share her mother's

obvious commitment to the Tlingit belief in reincarnation. She was skeptical about reincarnation and found herself alternating between belief and disbelief. She found her strong attachment to Walter and Rosemary Ford difficult to explain and even more difficult to deny, which she did not attempt to do.

Comment. If the case is best explained as one of reincarnation, it provides an example of the occurrence of behavioral memories in the absence of imaged ones. Susan may have had some imaged memories that she and her mother later forgot. Her pointing to the birthmark suggests this, but we cannot know it.

THE CASE OF MUHİTTİN YILMAZ

Summary of the Case and Its Investigation

Muhittin Yılmaz was born at Yenice (near Tarsus), Turkey, in 1960. His parents were Cumali Yılmaz and his wife, Şerife. Muhittin was the only son in the family; he had six sisters. Muhittin's family were Turkish-speaking Alevis.

Before Muhittin's birth both his mother and one of his paternal aunts had dreams that indicated to them that Muhittin's paternal grandfather, Muhittin Uğur Yılmaz,[2] would reincarnate. I shall describe these dreams later.

Soon after Muhittin's birth his mother noticed that he had a red birthmark in the right upper quadrant of his abdomen. The birthmark subsequently faded somewhat, but was still clearly visible when I photographed it in 1975 (Figure 7-2).

When Muhittin was about 3 years old, he began to make statements and recognitions indicating that he was remembering the life of Muhittin Uğur Yılmaz.

Reşat Bayer first learned of this case in April 1975. He was in Yenice to investigate other cases when he met Şerife Yılmaz, who told him about the case of her son. Reşat Bayer interviewed her, Muhittin himself, Döndü Uğur Yılmaz, Muhittin Uğur Yılmaz's widow, and Bayramali Yılmaz, one of Muhittin Uğur Yılmaz's sons. In September 1975, I went with Reşat Bayer to Yenice, and we interviewed together Muhittin and his mother. We did not interview Muhittin's father, Cumali Yılmaz.

Not satisfied with omitting Muhittin's father from the persons interviewed, I asked Dr. Can Polat to meet and interview him, which he did on May 25, 1983. He also obtained some information from two additional informants whom Reşat Bayer and I had not met. In November 1988 Dr. Polat met Cumali Yılmaz again in order to clarify further details of the case.

In October 1989, Dr. Jürgen Keil was in south central Turkey, and at my request he had another interview with Cumali Yılmaz and also met and interviewed Cumali's brother, Sabahattin Yılmaz, whom none of us had met earlier.

[2]Muhittin's paternal grandfather (the presumed previous personality of this case) was born Muhittin Uğur, but later (for a reason that I do not know) changed his name to Yılmaz. It will help to distinguish him from his grandson if I refer to him as Muhittin Uğur Yılmaz.

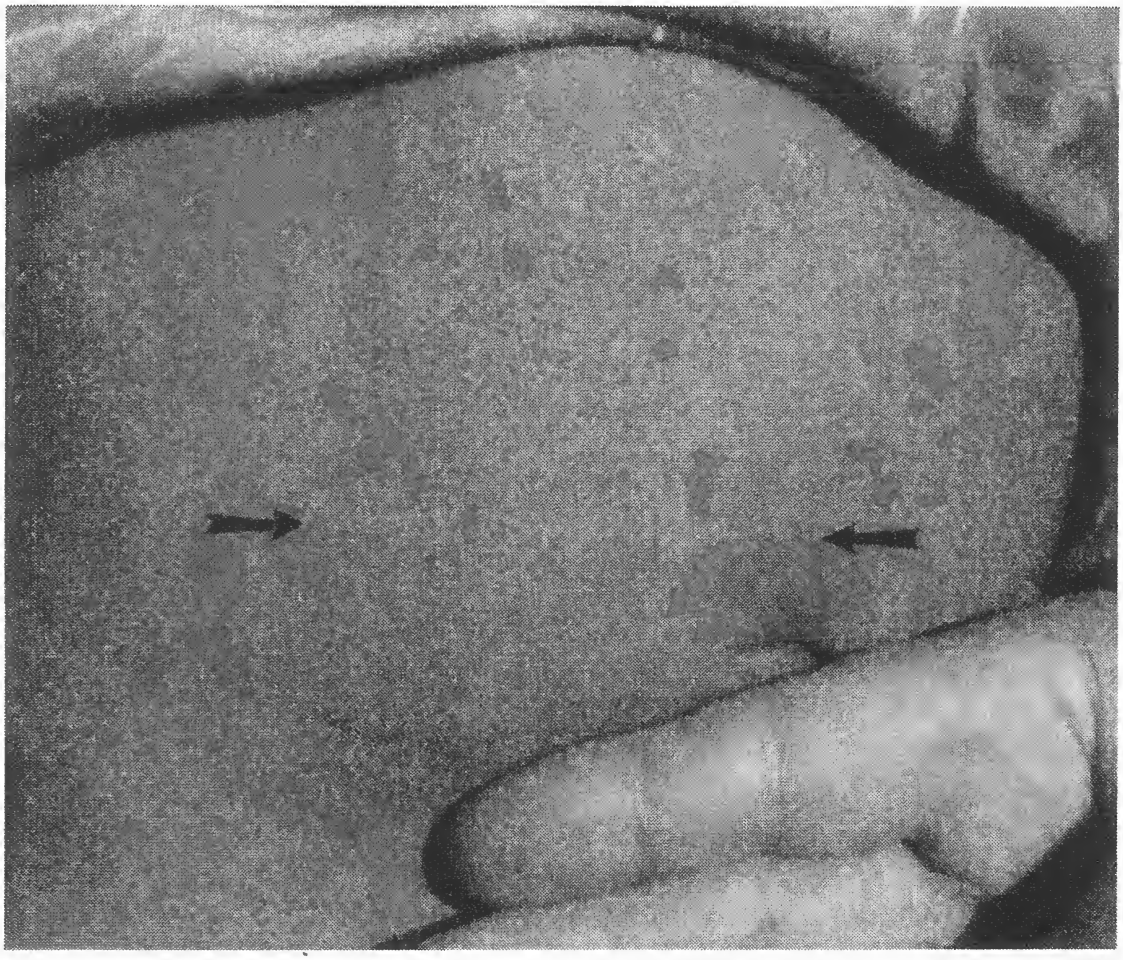

Figure 7-2 Birthmark on Muhittin Yılmaz as it appeared in December 1975, when he was about 15 years old. The birthmark was a horizontal linear area of decreased pigmentation beginning in the midline about 3 centimeters above the umbilicus and extending laterally about 10 centimeters. It was about 5 millimeters wide.

Persons Interviewed during the Investigation

In Yenice we interviewed:

Muhittin Yılmaz
Cumali Yılmaz, Muhittin's father
Şerife Yılmaz, Muhittin's mother
Sabahattin Yılmaz, Cumali Yılmaz's brother
Döndü Uğur Yılmaz, Muhittin Uğur Yılmaz's widow
Bayramali Yılmaz, one of Muhittin Uğur Yılmaz's sons
Şenkız Yılmaz, Muhittin Uğur Yılmaz's daughter
Halis Bor ("Halis Emmi"), neighbor

Döndü Uğur Yılmaz was of little help. She gave her age as perhaps 60, perhaps 70, and said that her memory was failing badly, which seemed true.

Geographical and Other Background Factors

Yenice is a small town located about 15 kilometers from the city of Tarsus in south central Turkey.

This is a same-family case, and the houses of the immediate families concerned were both in Yenice.

Unlike most of the families concerned in cases I have studied in Turkey, who were of Arabic origin, the families of this case were Turks. Reşat Bayer and I found and investigated some seven cases in Yenice, all among Turks and all same-family cases.

The Life, Death, and Character of Muhittin Uğur Yılmaz

I learned only a little information about Muhittin Uğur Yılmaz from his daughter-in-law, Şerife Yılmaz. Reşat Bayer also obtained little information about him during the interviews he had with Muhittin Uğur Yılmaz's son (Bayramali) and widow; he concentrated his interviews with them on what these informants could report about Muhittin's statements and behavior. Cumali Yılmaz, Muhittin's father and another of Muhittin Uğur Yılmaz's three sons, furnished some additional information to Dr. Polat.

Muhittin Uğur Yılmaz was a farmer of cotton and grapes. He also owned and operated a café in Yenice. I did not learn the date of his birth. He married a woman called Döndü, and they had three sons and a daughter. He drank alcohol excessively and continued drinking up to the time of his death. In addition to alcohol, he occasionally took hashish. He was very fond of gambling.

In the 1950s he developed a disease of some internal organ and was operated upon. Şerife Yılmaz could furnish no further details about his illness. Although she lived in Yenice, she was not married when her father-in-law died, which accounts perhaps for her not knowing more about the nature of his illness. She explained that everyone in the town knew that Muhittin Uğur Yılmaz had been operated upon. Döndü Uğur Yılmaz said that her husband died of cancer. Cumali Yılmaz told Dr. Polat that his father had cancer of the lung. He also said that his father was jaundiced during his terminal illness and that he was operated on 3 to 5 months before his death, which occurred on July 11, 1953.

Comment. From the fragments of information we obtained I infer that Muhittin Uğur Yılmaz probably developed an obstructive jaundice that surgeons considered possibly operable. So they performed an exploratory operation, and then found an inoperable cancer of the head of the pancreas or perhaps a cancer of the liver. The cancer of the lung mentioned by Cumali Yılmaz may have been metastatic.

About Muhittin Uğur Yılmaz's character I learned—apart from Muhittin Yılmaz's own statements—only that he had been a generous person, particularly when it came to distributing alcohol among his friends. (Şerife Yılmaz was our informant for this detail.)

Two Announcing Dreams

Şerife Yılmaz said that she dreamed of her father-in-law sometime before Muhittin's birth. She did not say how long before his birth the dream had occurred. In it her father-in-law gave her a rose, which she put behind her ear.

After having this dream, Şerife consulted a *hoca* (saintly man credited with paranormal powers) in Adana and asked him to interpret the dream. He said that it meant Muhittin Uğur Yılmaz was going to be born again. He did not say in what family, but he added that (in the expected reincarnation) he would not live long.

Şerife Yılmaz said that her sister-in-law, Şenkız, also had a dream perhaps pertinent to Muhittin's birth. In this dream Muhittin Uğur Yılmaz and his wife were walking together, the former ahead of his wife. In her dream Şenkız called out to her mother: "Where are you going? Wait here. My father has already come back."

As mentioned, I did not meet Şenkız, but Dr. Polat met her and asked her about this dream. She said that she had had a dream before Muhittin's birth, but could no longer remember its content. She added that Muhittin was fond of her and liked her more than his own mother.

The foregoing dreams did not influence Muhittin's family to name him after his grandfather. It is customary in Turkey to name a child after a grandparent.

Statements and Recognitions Made by Muhittin

According to Şerife Yılmaz, Muhittin's first allusion to the previous life occurred when he was 3 years old. The family was attending a wedding, when Muhittin pointed to the bride and said: "She is my daughter." This was correct for Muhittin Uğur Yılmaz, because the bride was his daughter, Şenkız. (She had had one of the announcing dreams mentioned above.)

Muhittin was not credited with any specific recognitions that anyone thought unusual. He was after all, remembering the life of his own grandfather, and most members of his grandfather's family were therefore known to Muhittin normally. He did, however, behave familiarly with older members of the family and with Muhittin Uğur Yılmaz's friends. Once Muhittin went over to the home of one Ali Selmi, who had been a friend of Muhittin Uğur Yılmaz. Muhittin found him drinking rakı and remarked: "Selmi, we used to drink rakı together, so give me a little now."

On another occasion, Muhittin met a man familiarly called Halis Emmi—which means "Uncle Halis"[3]—in the cotton fields. Muhittin said to him: "Do you see, Uncle Halis, that before I was big and you were small. Now it is the opposite. You are big and I am small." When Dr. Polat met Halis Bor (alias Halis Emmi) in 1983, he could not remember this recognition, but Muhittin's father, Cumali, did

[3]The standard Turkish words for uncle are *amca* (father's brother) and *dayi* (mother's brother). Dr. Kemal Elbirlik told me that the word *emmi* (used by Muhittin) is a dialect expression for an older respected person, not necessarily a relative, who could be regarded as a "village uncle."

remember and confirm it, at least in part. He said that when Muhittin had met Halis Emmi on the street, he had said to him: "Now I have become small and you have become old."

Muhittin's Statements in 1975. When Reşat Bayer and I talked with Muhittin in 1975, he recalled quite readily details of his grandfather's life. I will summarize what he told us in the April and September interviews of that year.

He said that he had a daughter and three sons. He gave their names as: Şenkız (the daughter), Bayramali, Ali, and Cumali (the sons). (Ali was incorrect; the third son was called Sabahattin.) None of his children were married when he died. His wife's name was Döndü Uğur Yılmaz. He said he had no fixed occupation, but owned a café. He gambled and each night lost in gambling whatever he had earned during the day. He smoked and drank alcohol excessively. He also took other intoxicants.

When he was 56 years old, he suddenly gave up gambling, drinking alcohol, and taking drugs. About a month after this reform he became ill with cancer. (Muhittin pointed to the region of his liver to indicate the site of his illness.) He became jaundiced. He was admitted to a hospital in Ankara, where he was operated upon. He did not remember how long after the operation he died.

Muhittin said that he still remembered many details of the previous life, but had forgotten others. He particularly remembered how he had gambled.

Comment. Cumali Yılmaz told Dr. Polat that his father had continued to drink alcohol right up to the time of his death. This is discrepant with Muhittin's memory that about a month before he became ill in the previous life he had stopped taking alcohol and drugs. Perhaps Muhittin had a memory of having lost the desire for alcohol and drugs (this anorexia being an early symptom of his cancer) about a month before he noticed other symptoms and recognized that he was ill.

Muhittin's Behavior Related to the Previous Life

I have already alluded to Muhittin's attitude of familiarity with older members of his family. Şerife Yılmaz said that Muhittin behaved as if he was the head of the family; but she attributed at least some of this authoritative attitude on his part to his being the only son among six daughters.

I have given one example of Muhittin's soliciting alcohol from a man whom he identified as a drinking companion of Muhittin Uğur Yılmaz. Şerife Yılmaz said that when Muhittin was between 4 and 5 years old, he would go to the family's neighbors and drink wine or rakı, which they (the neighbors) allowed him to have.

Cumali Yılmaz remembered an occasion when he was carrying Muhittin on his shoulders crossing a field. Muhittin noticed a few men from Yenice who were drinking alcohol near the field. He turned to them and said: "You are drinking and drinking without thinking about me, without feeling ashamed of yourselves" (meaning presumably for not offering him a drink).

Şerife Yılmaz said that Muhittin was a generous person, as her father-in-law had been.

Muhittin's Birthmark

Muhittin's birthmark closely resembled the scar of a transverse abdominal incision made for a surgical operation. Its medial end was located about 3 centimeters above the umbilicus, and extended almost from the midline laterally to the right. When I examined Muhittin in 1975, the birthmark measured about 10 centimeters long and about 5 millimeters wide.

Muhittin's mother said that the birthmark was redder when Muhittin was born than it was when I examined it in 1975. I do not remember it as being unusually red in 1975. As I think Figure 7-2 shows, the birthmark is somewhat paler than the skin surrounding it.

Both Muhittin and his mother denied that he had ever had any pain or other discomfort in the region of the birthmark. His mother said that he had cried a great deal during the first 6 months of his life. She conjectured that he might then have been having pain and that this had made him cry; but she did not have any evidence for this.

I have not been able to obtain a medical report concerning the illness and operation of Muhittin Uğur Yılmaz. I have earlier given my reasons for conjecturing that the cancer was of the head of the pancreas.

Muhittin's Later Development

When Dr. Polat went to Yenice in May 1983, he learned that Muhittin had killed himself 3 years earlier, in April 1980. He had just become engaged to a girl of Yenice. He put a loaded rifle into his mouth and pulled the trigger. We learned that Muhittin did not wish to marry the girl to whom he had reluctantly become engaged under pressure from his family. Finding no other way out of his impasse, he killed himself. His early death provided a startling fulfillment of the hoca's prediction—that he would not live long—made when he interpreted Şerife's dream 20 years earlier.

We obtained no information about Muhittin's later behavior from his father, who was still greatly troubled by his son's death—even 8 and 9 years after it had occurred. Muhittin's uncle Sabahattin told Dr. Keil that so far as he knew Muhittin had not developed the habits of Muhittin Uğur Yılmaz with regard to gambling, taking hashish, and drinking alcohol excessively. He drank alcohol but no more than other young men of his age.

THE CASE OF SUSUMU OGURA

I first learned about this case from Dr. Tadao Ogura, who is the subject's older brother. The case had deeply impressed Dr. Ogura because of Susumu's unusual birthmark, which is the sole item of evidence in the case. Dr. Ogura told me all he knew about the case during an interview I had with him in New York

City on April 13, 1973. Subsequently, Mr. Tosio Kasahara obtained additional information (in 1980 and 1981) from interviews with the subject and from correspondence and a telephone conversation with Susumu Ogura's father, Hiroji Ogura. (Susumu's mother died early in 1980.)

Susumu Ogura worked in 1980 as a traveling salesman, and he was away from Tokyo when I was there in 1980. I have never met him. Photographs of his birthmark were furnished to me first by Susumu Ogura himself (through Dr. Tadao Ogura). Subsequently, Tosio Kasahara took some more photographs, one of which I have reproduced in Figure 7-3.

Susumu Ogura was the youngest of five children (all sons) born to his parents, Hiroji and Kei Ogura. (Dr. Ogura, the oldest son, was born on September 1, 1932.) Susumu was born in Niigata, Japan, on March 21, 1944. All his brothers were also born in Niigata.

Almost immediately after Susumu's birth his mother noticed a prominent birthmark behind his right ear. She drew her husband's attention to the birthmark. They agreed that it had a close correspondence to the scar of an operation for otitis media (mastoidectomy) that one of their older sons had undergone several years earlier. He had died from the effects of the illness and operation.

This deceased son, Shizuo, was the third son of the family. He was born on September 30, 1937. When he was about 1½ years old, he developed otitis media of the right ear, for which he underwent a mastoidectomy at Wada Hospital in Niigata. He never fully recovered from the operation, but died some weeks later, on April 20, 1939. His older brother (Dr. Ogura) said that he died of complicating pneumonia 2 or 3 weeks after the operation; his father said that he died about 2 months later of "weakness after the operation." Wada Hospital no longer existed when we investigated this case, and we could not obtain a record of Shizuo's admission to it.

Following Shizuo's death, another son, Takashi, was born on May 15, 1940, but he had no birthmark. Then Susumu was born in 1944.

Susumu Ogura has had no memories of a previous life. He has not suffered from ear disease or deafness.

Susumu Ogura's Birthmark

Susumu Ogura's birthmark (Figure 7-3) was about 3 centimeters long and 5 millimeters wide at its widest point. It was hairless, slightly elevated above the surrounding skin, and rather more shiny than the surrounding skin. Dr. Ogura, who has seen the birthmark (whereas I have not), described it to me as resembling a keloid.

The birthmark had a crescentic shape, which accords with the incision usually made for the operation of mastoidectomy, an operation that antibiotics have since rendered largely obsolete. Figure 7-4, reproduced from a monograph on surgery of the ear, shows the usual crescentic incision made when intractable mastoiditis was treated surgically (Shambaugh, 1959).

Figure 7-3 Birthmark on back of the head of Susumu Ogura as it appeared in 1980, when he was 36 years old. The birthmark was a hairless area about 3 centimeters long and 5 millimeters wide. It was shiny and slightly elevated above the surrounding skin. The photograph shows the crescentic shape of the birthmark.

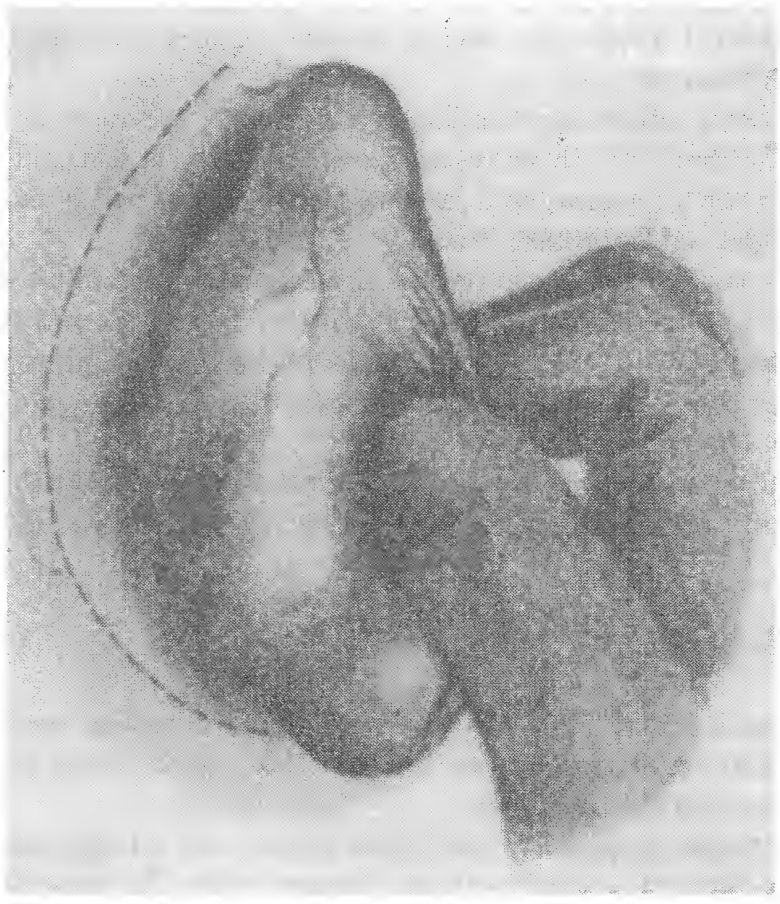

Figure 7-4
Illustration of the incision (dotted line) usual in the operation of mastoidectomy. (From Shambaugh, 1959). (Courtesy of W. B. Saunders Company.)

The birthmark had shifted since Susumu's birth in relation to neighboring anatomical landmarks. It was farther from the junction of the pinna with the skin of the scalp than it had been when he was born.

No other member of the family had a birthmark similar to that of Susumu.

Comment

Susumu's mother was well acquainted with the site of the operation on her son Shizuo's ear. The case is therefore one for which we cannot exclude the hypothesis of maternal impression on the developing embryo of Susumu. Yet it seems reasonable to suppose that Kei Ogura's grief for the loss of Shizuo was greater at the time of the birth of her next-born son, Takashi, and less by the time (in 1944) when Susumu was born. Takashi, however, had no birthmark and Susumu had one.

THE CASE OF JACINTA AGBO

Summary of the Case and Its Investigation

Jacinta Agbo was born in Enugu, Anambra State, Nigeria, on December 7, 1980. Her parents were Edward Agbo and his wife, Therese. They lived in the village of Akwuke Awkunanaw, which is about 5 kilometers from Enugu. They were Igbos. Edward Agbo was a small shopkeeper. Jacinta was their sixth and youngest living child. Three other children had died.

At her birth, Jacinta had a birthmark extending in a circular manner entirely around her head (Figures 7-5 and 7-6). On the basis of this birthmark and a dream that Therese Agbo had had when pregnant with Jacinta, she was identified as the reincarnation of Edward Agbo's older brother, Nsude.

I learned of Jacinta's case when I was in Nigeria in December 1982. At that time I met and talked briefly with both her parents. (Dr. Stuart Edelstein recorded most of the information furnished by Edward Agbo, since I reached the site of the interview later, after having been detained by another matter.) Jacinta had not yet begun to speak, and I have not met her or her family since.

In March 1985 and again in October 1988, Nicholas Ibekwe went to Akwuke Awkunanaw on my behalf and obtained some additional information about the case.

The Life, Death, and Character of Nsude Agbo

Nsude Agbo was born in about 1914. His father was Inyama; I did not learn his mother's name. He had six sisters and one brother, Edward. He lived at Akwuke Awkunanaw and worked as a coal miner.

In March 1970 a quarrel developed over land rights between the villagers of Akwuke Awkunanaw and those of a nearby village, Amagu Ibite. The quarrel

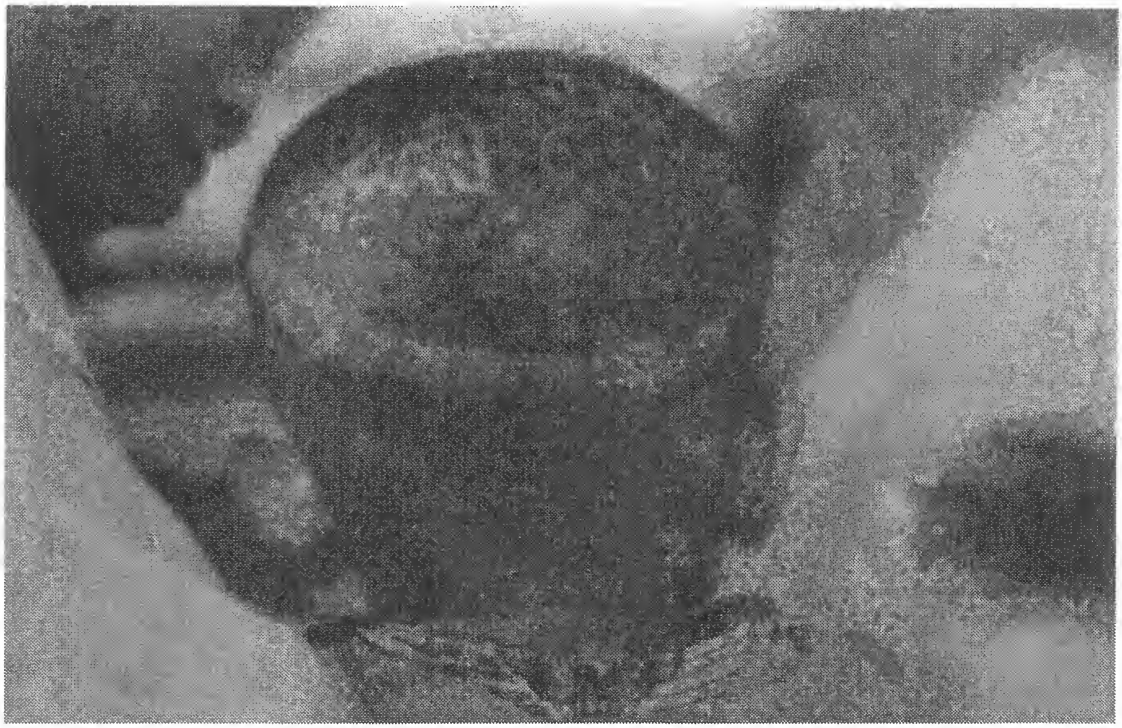

Figure 7-5 Birthmark on the head of Jacinta Agbo as it appeared in December 1982, when she was just 2 years old. The birthmark was a linear, hairless area extending entirely around the superior part of the head. It had a somewhat uneven, scarlike surface. Its width varied between 2 centimeters and about 3.5 centimeters. This photograph shows the posterior part of Jacinta's head.

Figure 7-6 Another view of the birthmark on Jacinta Agbo's head to show how it completely encircled the head. This photograph shows the superior area of Jacinta's head. It was taken at the same time as that of Figure 7-5.

developed into a riot with violence, and during the course of this, someone struck Nsude Agbo on the head with a heavy stick or club. He was transported to the University of Nigeria Teaching Hospital at Enugu and operated on there. He died the following day and was buried with his head still encircled by a bandage that had been placed on it after his operation.

The man who had clubbed Nsude was arrested, tried, and sentenced to 7 years in prison. Dr. Edelstein and I did not meet him.

I hoped to obtain a report of the operation on Nsude Agbo at the Teaching Hospital in Enugu. The files were searched for me, but no record of Nsude's operation was found; I was told that during the period of the Biafran War in Nigeria (1967-70) medical records were misplaced and mostly lost or destroyed. (Enugu was the capital of Biafra, which tried to secede from the rest of Nigeria.)

As I mentioned, Nsude was Edward Agbo's older brother. They were close friends, and his attitudes were known in Edward's family. Therese Agbo said that Nsude had often expressed a wish to be reborn as a female. He was not an effeminate person, but he believed that women had a much easier time in life than men, who had to work hard to support ungrateful women. He thought he would like to be in their position in his next incarnation.

An Announcing Dream

When Therese Agbo was about 6 months pregnant with Jacinta, she dreamed that Nsude Agbo came to her and spoke. They had a conversation, but Therese Agbo did not remember (or did not tell me) what the conversation was about. She remembered that in the dream Nsude did not announce that he was going to be reborn.[4] Therese remembered also that Nsude did not have his head bandaged in the dream. (This last detail pertains to Jacinta's birthmark.)

Statements Made by Jacinta

Jacinta was barely 2 years old when Dr. Edelstein and I saw her. She had not begun to talk. In March 1985 Nicholas Ibekwe learned from Therese Agbo that when Jacinta was 2 years old, that is, not long after Dr. Edelstein and I had seen her, she had said that the "scar" on her head came from her previous life. She had made no other statements about the previous life and had not identified herself as Nsude Agbo.

When Jacinta was about 7½ years old, she was with her mother, who was preparing food in the kitchen, and remarked that she was her father's brother. Because Edward Agbo had only one brother, she must have meant Nsude.

[4]It is unusual for the Igbo people to have dreams before or during a woman's pregnancy that announce who is being reincarnated in the baby to be born (Stevenson, 1985, 1986). In this respect the Igbo differ from the Tlingit, the Burmese, and the Alevis (of Turkey), who frequently have such announcing dreams.

Jacinta's Behavior Related to the Previous Life

Edward Agbo said that, even at the age of 2 years, Jacinta seemed to be especially attached to him.

By March 1985, Jacinta had been observed to have a marked phobia of sticks.

Up to this age she had not shown any unusual behavior that could be characterized as masculine. However, in October 1988 Therese Agbo told Nicholas Ibekwe that Jacinta played much with boys and seemed to think of herself as one. "She does everything they [meaning boys] do."

Jacinta's Birthmark

A remarkable feature of Jacinta's birthmark—apart from its unusual form—is that, according to both her parents, it was *not* present at birth. About a month after Jacinta's birth the area of the mark developed blisters. These then healed to form the scar visible in 1982. Figures 7-5 and 7-6 show that the scar extended entirely around Jacinta's head. It was a hairless area with an uneven surface varying in width between 2 and about 3.5 centimeters.

Nicholas Ibekwe examined Jacinta's birthmark in October 1988 and said that it had not faded or changed in appearance. It even seemed to him more prominent than it had been. Jacinta was then almost 8 years old.

No other member of the family had a birthmark like Jacinta's. Edward Agbo said that he had six siblings besides Nsude. Many of them had children, none with a mark like Jacinta's.

Comment. After being clubbed on the head, Nsude Agbo almost certainly had a depressed fracture of the skull. In the Teaching Hospital at Enugu the surgeon, if he had followed the usual procedure, would have turned down a flap or flaps of the scalp, made a hole or holes in the intact part of the skull, and attempted to prise up the depressed fragments of bone that would have been pressing on the meninges and brain. Having done this and effected any other repairs or drainage that seem feasible, he would have replaced and stitched the scalp. A bandage over the scalp incision would have completed the work of the operation.

It would be unusual for the surgeon to have extended his incision in the scalp entirely around the head as Jacinta's birthmark suggests. (He might have needed two skin flaps, one superiorly and one posteriorly, but I think this unlikely.) However, when he came to apply his bandage to the replaced and sewn-up scalp, it would have been convenient to have carried the bandage entirely around the head; he probably tied it to give it reasonable purchase and tightness on the head. In addition, the scalp incision itself would have been thin and, when the wound was closed, no thicker than a pencil line. Yet Jacinta's birthmark was more than 2 centimeters wide. For these two reasons (the extension of the birthmark all the way around the head and its width much greater than that of an incision), I believe Jacinta's birthmark corresponded not to Nsude's scalp wound, but to the

bandage placed around his wound after the operation. The point may receive further support from noting that Nsude was buried with this bandage still around the head of the body. This is one of several cases in which a birthmark corresponds not to a wound, but to some physical feature associated with a wound.[5]

THE CASE OF MAUNG NYUNT WIN

Summary of the Case and Its Investigation

Maung Nyunt Win is one of two subjects whom I detected myself among members of crowds that had assembled to observe interviews for other cases. I met him in March 1978 in Thigone, Burma, where U Win Maung and I were studying another case. During a pause in our work, my eyes wandered over the faces of the people around us, and I noticed the large hairy nevus on Maung Nyunt Win (Figure 7-7). It occurred to me that this nevus might have derived from a previous life, and when U Win Maung enquired about this, we learned that it was indeed thought to have had such an origin. I mention my role in finding the case not to vaunt my perspicuity, but rather to suggest that many more cases with birthmarks (and birth defects also) may remain unnoticed because no one has had the opportunity or the curiosity to enquire about them.

Maung Nyunt Win's parents were U Maung Pu (a blacksmith) and his wife, Daw Kyi. Maung Nyunt Win was the fifth child among their eight children. He was born in Thigone village, which is about 15 kilometers northwest of Pyawbwe, in Upper Burma. In 1978 Daw Kyi thought that Maung Nyunt Win was about 11 years old and therefore that he had been born in 1967, but she could only make an approximate estimate of this date.

Maung Nyunt Win's birthmark was noticed soon after his birth. Later, when he became able to speak, he made statements indicating that he was remembering the life of a neighbor and distant relative of his family, U Po Hla. He also showed some behavior that harmonized with what was known about U Po Hla or might have been expected of him.

Because in March 1978 we were at Thigone mainly for the study of another case, we had time then to do little more than record some preliminary information

[5]In Chapter 3 I described three cases attributed to maternal impressions in which the stimulus for a birthmark was the sight of blood on an injured person a pregnant woman saw. (These are Cases 23, 26, and 34 of Table 3-2.) In Chapter 6 I described birthmarks on Sunita Singh and Narong Yensiri that appeared to correspond to blood left on a dead body before its cremation or burial. In these cases—and others I describe in later chapters of this work—a subject's birthmark corresponded not to a wound but to some other feature on a deceased person's body; and I think Jacinta's birthmark corresponding to the bandage around Nsude's head belongs in this group.

In Chapter 12 I describe another case, that of Ma Win Win Nyunt, in which a strip of adhesive tape on a deceased person seems to have been the stimulus for a birthmark.

Figure 7-7 Hairy hyperpigmented nevus on the right cheek of Maung Nyunt Win when he was approximately 11 years old in 1978. The nevus was round and approximately 1.2 centimeters in diameter.

about Maung Nyunt Win's case. Fortunately, this included a brief interview with Daw Kyi; because when we returned to Thigone a year later, in March 1979, we learned that U Maung Pu had moved his family to a village near Wundwin, which was nowhere near our route for that year's journey.

It happened, however, that several middle-aged and elderly villagers of Thigone who were available remembered something about U Po Hla, the person of whom Maung Nyunt Win claimed to be the reincarnation; and one of these, Daw Do Mai, a daughter of U Po Hla, also remembered both some of what Maung Nyunt Win had said about the previous life and some of his related behavior. In 1979 the most important informants besides Daw Do Mai were another of U Po Hla's children, U Tha Wa, and one of his nieces by marriage, Daw Ohn Khin. In what follows I have sometimes combined their testimonies when they generally agreed, although I have mentioned all important discrepancies between them.

In May 1983 U Win Maung, at my request, wrote to U Maung Pu and Daw Kyi asking them to answer some additional questions, which they did, by letter.

Relationship and Acquaintance between the Two Families

U Po Hla was distantly related to Maung Nyunt Win's family, at least by marriage. His niece, Daw Ohn Khin, was a second cousin of Maung Nyunt Win's father, U Maung Pu. In the village of Thigone, U Po Hla's house was only three or four houses apart from that of U Maung Pu on the same lane. The two families concerned were thus well acquainted with each other.

U Po Hla's Life and Illness

U Po Hla was born in the village of Myaung-Gwa, but lived during the later years of his life in Thigone village, where he worked as a blacksmith. He married Daw Pu Ma, and they had at least five children. I know nothing else about him that does not pertain to Maung Nyunt Win's birthmark.

In late middle life U Po Hla became troubled with a large cyst on his right cheek near his ear. Probably because he considered this unsightly, he punctured the cyst with a pin and squeezed from it some semisolid matter. This was described to me as "somewhat like pus, but solid." This operation flattened the cyst. The area where it had been healed up, but a black mark, described as the size of a small pea, remained. (From the description I think the cyst must have been an epidermal or sebaceous cyst.)

U Po Hla lived 10 years after he operated on his cyst, and informants attributed his death to old age. It had no connection with the operation he performed on the cyst on his face. One informant gave his age at death as 70 and another said that he had been 75; two other informants thought that he was considerably younger, but over 60. Informants were as vague about the year of U Po Hla's death as Daw Kyi had been about that of Maung Nyunt Win's birth. In 1979 they placed U Po Hla's death as having occurred 10 or 12 years earlier, which would be in 1967-1969, but no one suggested that Maung Nyunt Win had been born before U Po Hla died. In their 1983 letter to U Win Maung, U Maung Pu and Daw Kyi estimated that Maung Nyunt Win had been born about a year after U Po Hla's death.

Statements Made by Maung Nyunt Win

When Maung Nyunt Win was 5 years old, Daw Pu Ma (U Po Hla's widow) became ill. Daw Kyi went to her house to enquire about her health, and Maung Nyunt Win accompanied her. When they came back to their house, Maung Nyunt Win began to cry and spoke the name of Daw Pu Ma. Then he began to speak about the life of U Po Hla. According to Daw Kyi, this was Maung Nyunt Win's first reference to the previous life. However, Daw Do Mai recalled that Maung Nyunt Win had come around to her house when he was only 3 and had called her "daughter." He told Daw Do Mai and her younger sister that he was "U Po Hla Gyi." (The Burmese word *gyi* means "big," and he may have added it to the name in order to emphasize that, although he was in the body of a child, he claimed to

be their father.) Daw Do Mai asked him: "Are you really our father?" and he replied: "Yes, I am."

When Maung Nyunt Win was about 5 years old, he pointed to his birthmark and said: "I had this before," meaning in the previous life.

When he saw U Po Hla's small forge bellows, he claimed it as his. I did not learn how old he was at the time he said this.

Maung Nyunt Win's Behavior Related to the Previous Life

Once when one of U Po Hla's daughters was sufficiently ill to require admission to the hospital in Meiktila (the nearest large city), her husband went to visit her, and Maung Nyunt Win followed him there. The distance is at least 30 kilometers, and I did not learn how Maung Nyunt Win traveled from Thigone to Meiktila; however, Thigone is only 3 kilometers from the all-weather road between Pyawbwe and Meiktila, so if he walked to the highway he could have got into a bus, or perhaps a lorry, that was going to Meiktila.

Maung Nyunt Win remained firmly convinced that he was Daw Do Mai's father, and in talking to older persons of his family he would not use the honorifics that Burmese children are expected to add to names when they speak to their elders. He would address U Po Hla's children as if they were his children.

U Maung Pu and Daw Kyi said that Maung Nyunt Win resembled U Po Hla in speech and behavior, but they did not give particulars about these resemblances. Maung Nyunt Win showed a skill in the work of a blacksmith, which U Po Hla had been.

Maung Nyunt Win stopped speaking spontaneously about the previous life when he was between 8 and 9 years old.

Maung Nyunt Win's Birthmark

Figure 7-7 shows Maung Nyunt Win's birthmark. It was a deeply pigmented hairy nevus, round in shape and approximately 1.2 centimeters in diameter. It was neither elevated nor depressed. It had many hairs on its surface.

Daw Ohn Khin and Daw Do Mai both remembered seeing Maung Nyunt Win as an infant, and they were sure that he was born with the mark in question. Daw Kyi stated that none of her other seven children and no other member of the family had a nevus like Maung Nyunt Win's. Daw Do Mai confirmed this.

Daw Do Mai and Daw Ohn Khin, both of whom had seen the scar on U Po Hla's face after he had drained the cyst on it, said that Maung Nyunt Win's birthmark was in about the same place as U Po Hla's scar. Daw Do Mai remarked further that Maung Nyunt Win's birthmark and U Po Hla's scar were about the same size.

Comment. Daw Do Mai described the residual scar on her father's face as having been "about the size of a pea." Daw Ohn Khin described it as "the size of a small pea." Yet Maung Nyunt Win's birthmark in 1978, when he was about 11 years old, was clearly larger in area than the diameter even of a large pea. I con-

jecture that U Po Hla's healed scar may have had a small central area, which was about the size of a pea, surrounded by an outer area of larger diameter.

THE CASE OF JAMES WILDER

Summary of the Case and Its Investigation

Almost the sole feature of this case is a birthmark that the subject, James Wilder, had on the skin of the left side of his upper abdomen (Figure 7-8). This was believed to correspond to the wound that occurred in the abdomen of his mother's cousin, James McIntosh, when an untreated cancer (apparently of the stomach) burst through his abdominal wall.

James Wilder was born on June 13, 1938, in Kitwancool, British Columbia. His parents were Henry Wilder and his wife, Gertrude. Henry Wilder was a fisherman. He and his wife were both Gitksans. James was their eighth and last child. When we first learned of this case, James was in middle adulthood and, like his father before him, working as a fisherman.

Dr. David Barker obtained some preliminary information about the case during a field trip he made to British Columbia in August 1978. His informant was Gertrude Wilder, James Wilder's mother, and I met and interviewed her myself in 1979. In the ensuing years I tried to meet James Wilder also, but as he was a fisherman, he was often away when I was in British Columbia. (In 1979 I did meet his older brother, William Wilder, but he contributed no useful additional information.) Finally, I was able to meet James Wilder on April 20, 1984. We had a long interview at his home in Kitwancool, and I photographed his birthmark.

Copies of birth and death certificates for the two persons concerned in the case provide the only additional information available.

The Death of James McIntosh

Gertrude Wilder said that James McIntosh had a cancer "which broke out of his left side." This was presumably a cancer of the stomach that had been left untreated. The death certificate I obtained recorded that James McIntosh died of cancer in Kitwancool on August 27, 1931. He had been ill 6 months and was 57 years old when he died. The certificate did not give the location of the cancer, and I did not learn the interval between the bursting of the cancer through the abdominal wall and James McIntosh's death. However, we can conjecture that with such an advanced cancer, death must have followed within a few days or weeks at most of its penetration through the abdominal wall.

Gertrude Wilder told Dr. Barker that James McIntosh had been her uncle, and Dr. Barker drew a genealogy showing that James McIntosh was Gertrude's mother's brother. However, a year later, Gertrude Wilder told me that James McIntosh was "my uncle brother, my mother's cousin." Thus doubt remains about

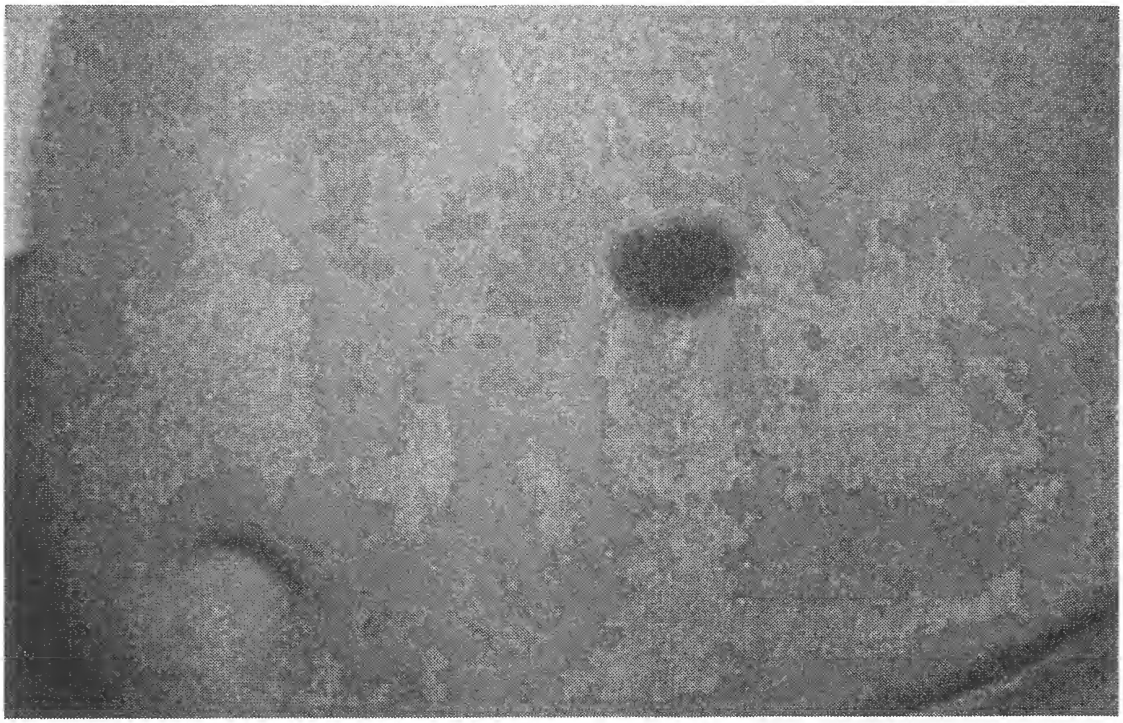

Figure 7-8 Birthmark in the left upper abdomen of James Wilder as it appeared in April 1984, when he was not quite 46 years old. The birthmark was a large heavily pigmented macule, ovoid in shape, about 3 centimeters long and 1.5 centimeters wide.

the exact relationship between James McIntosh and Gertrude Wilder, although they appear to have been related on her mother's side.

A Possible Announcing Dream

Gertrude Wilder told both Dr. Barker and myself (at different times) that she had had no dream in connection with James's birth. However, James himself told me that his mother had told him about such a dream, and as it is possible that she had forgotten it—she was 77 in 1979—while he remembered it, I shall mention his account of it, even though I have it only at secondhand.

James McIntosh had appeared in a dream to Gertrude Wilder the day before James Wilder was born. In her dream his abdominal wound was showing. According to James Wilder, he was given the name "James" partly on the basis of this dream and partly because of the correspondence in location between the birthmark on his abdomen and the wound on James McIntosh's abdomen.

James Wilder's Possible Memory of James McIntosh When He Was Dying

Gertrude Wilder told me that she did not remember any statements about a previous life that James had made when a young child. She said: "We never paid any attention. He might have remembered and not said anything."

In 1984 James Wilder told me that he remembered seeing a man he thought was James McIntosh lying on a bed ill. The man was unable to pass urine (and perhaps also feces) normally, and he had an abdominal opening to permit this. As James Wilder remembered this scene, he seemed to be seeing the invalid man as if looking at him lying on the bed from the side; it was not a memory as the man on the bed would have perceived the scene himself. I told James Wilder that since James McIntosh had died almost 7 years before he (James Wilder) was born, he could not have seen James McIntosh as he was dying. James Wilder agreed and said that perhaps he was dimly remembering seeing some other man who had been dying. Another interpretation which I suggested to James Wilder was that he was remembering the last scenes of James McIntosh's life, but in a distorted manner.

Other than the foregoing memory, which may not have any connection with James McIntosh whatever, James Wilder had had no memories of a previous life, or at least none that he could remember in 1984, when he was nearly 46 years old.

James Wilder's Birthmark

Figure 7-8 shows that James Wilder's birthmark was a flat hyperpigmented macule. In 1984 it was dark brown in color. It was ovoid in shape and measured approximately 3 centimeters by 1.5 centimeters.

Gertrude Wilder said that the birthmark had formerly been darker than it later became. This was also the opinion of James's wife, Susan. (I met her once, in 1981, during one of my unsuccessful efforts to meet her husband.) She said that the birthmark used to be black and had faded somewhat. However, she thought its area had increased over what it had formerly been. In contrast to the foregoing opinions, James Wilder himself told me that the birthmark had not changed in location, size, or appearance since he was born (excepting the usual increase in size with the general growth of the body.)

He said that he never had any itching or pain at the site of the birthmark. He had no disorder of the gastrointestinal tract, so far as he knew. He expressed some mild concern about the possibility that the birthmark might become malignant and said that he was considering having it removed surgically.

James Wilder and Gertrude Wilder both told me that no other member of the family had had a birthmark like James's.

Other Information

Gertrude Wilder told me that her son resembled James McIntosh in facial appearance. She did not mention to me any similarity in the behavior of the two men, but James's older brother, William, told me that his mother had told him that the two men had shown resemblances in behavior. William had never known James McIntosh, and he said he could not comment on the possible resemblances between them.

Between James McIntosh's death in 1931 and James Wilder's birth in 1938, Gertrude Wilder gave birth to another son, William Wilder, who was born in 1936 and had no birthmark like that of James.

THE CASE OF MA KHIN SANDI

Summary of the Case and Its Investigation

Ma Khin Sandi was born in Rangoon, Burma, on September 9, 1983. Her parents were U Hla Shein and his wife, Ma Omar. Ma Khin Sandi was their first child. U Hla Shein was a sailor.

When Ma Khin Sandi was born, she was found to have two hyperpigmented macules, one on her lower back in the midline (Figure 7-9) and another on the dorsal surface of her left wrist (Figure 7-10). Her family regarded these birthmarks as indicating that she was the reincarnation of her maternal grandmother, Daw Khin Mya.

I first learned of this case in February 1984, when U Win Maung and I went to the home of Daw Khin Mya's husband, U Win Htoon, in order to make a follow-up visit for the case of Ma Sanda Win, who was U Win Htoon's daughter and Ma Omar's older sister. (I report Ma Sanda Win's case in Chapter 10.) U Win Htoon told us that he thought his infant granddaughter was the reincarnation of his

Figure 7-9 Birthmark on the lower back in the midline of Ma Khin Sandi as it appeared in February 1984, when she was 6 months old. The birthmark was a triangular area of hyperpigmentation, about 1 centimeter by 5 millimeters.

Figure 7-10 Birthmark on the dorsal aspect of Ma Khin Sandi's left wrist as it appeared in February 1984, when she was 6 months old. The birthmark was a round hyperpigmented macule about 2 millimeters in diameter.

wife. He and Ma Omar were the principal informants for the case; Ma Sanda Win contributed a little information. We visited the family again 2 years later in February 1986.

Up to the date of our last meeting her, Ma Khin Sandi had said nothing about a previous life.

The Last Illness and Death of Daw Khin Mya

Daw Khin Mya was born in Mandalay on May 29, 1929. She married U Win Htoon, who was for many years an employee of the American Embassy in Rangoon. In her later years, Daw Khin Mya suffered from hypertension for which she was treated. In the late summer of 1979 she had a stroke and lost the use of her right hand. She was unable to feed herself and became bedridden. She remained bedridden for the last 3 months of her life and developed a bedsore on her lower back in the midline. During the last 2 weeks of her life, she regained the use of her right hand, but her illness otherwise progressed, and she died on November 16, 1979. Members of her family believed her death had been hastened, if not caused by, some incorrect medication.

After Daw Khin Mya's death it was proposed to put a mark on her body with the expectation that this would generate a birthmark on the baby in whose body Daw Khin Mya would reincarnate.[6] U Win Htoon later remembered that a member of the family told him that he had marked the back of Daw Khin Mya's wrist. He thought this person was a nephew, but he was not sure. He himself was not a witness of the marking. Nor was Ma Sanda Win. She told us that she had heard discussion among "nephews and nieces" about marking Daw Khin Mya's body, but she did not see anyone actually make a mark. Ma Omar said that she was not even aware that anyone had marked her mother's body. U Win Htoon said that there had been "a crowd of relatives" in the house after his wife's death. He and his daughters may have been too absorbed by their grief to give attention to what other members of the family were doing.

Ma Omar's Experiences during Her Pregnancy with Ma Khin Sandi

Ma Omar practiced meditation during her pregnancy with Ma Khin Sandi. During this time, she thought that her baby would be her mother reborn and that the baby would have a birthmark on its back (corresponding to the ulcer on her mother's back before she died). She also had a strong impression that the baby would have a birthmark on the back of its left wrist.

She said that she did not pray for her mother to be reborn, but she believed that her baby would be the reincarnation of her mother.

Comment. Although Ma Omar said that she did not know that anyone had marked her mother's dead body, let alone where on her body the mark had been made, she may have overheard her relatives talking about the marking and have retained this knowledge subliminally. It might then have provided the basis for her conviction that her baby would have a birthmark on its left wrist.

I am not positive that Ma Omar spoke about her predictions of her baby's birthmarks before the baby was born. However, I think she did so, because U Win Htoon was the person to tell us first that Ma Omar had had, during her meditation, an impression that the baby would have a birthmark on its left wrist. I think he would not have thought this worth mentioning if Ma Omar had only mentioned her impression after the baby had been born.

If we believe that Ma Omar knew in advance that Ma Khin Sandi would have the two birthmarks she did have, we must take seriously the hypothesis of maternal impression for this case.

[6]This birthmark is an example of the type I call experimental birthmarks. They correspond to marks deliberately made on the bodies of dying or dead persons with the hope and expectation that a baby born later will have a birthmark corresponding to the mark made on the dying or dead person and will also, later, have memories of that person's life. I devote a large part of Chapter 10 to cases of this type. Ma Khin Sandi's experimental birthmark has weaker evidence than many examples of such birthmarks, because my informants had not witnessed the marking of Daw Khin Mya's body and had forgotten who had made the mark.

Ma Khin Sandi's Birthmarks

Figure 7-9 shows the birthmark in the midline of Ma Khin Sandi's lower back. It was a triangular-shaped hyperpigmented macule with dimensions of about 1 centimeter by 5 millimeters.

Figure 7-10 shows the hyperpigmented macule on the dorsal surface of Ma Khin Sandi's left wrist. It was round and about 2 millimeters in diameter.

Ma Khin Sandi's Behavior Related to the Previous Life

Ma Khin Sandi was learning to draw at the age of 2½ when I last saw her, in February 1986. I noticed that she was holding her pencil in her left hand, and when I commented on this, U Win Htoon said that she was left-handed. No other member of the family was left-handed.

Daw Khin Mya was right-handed, but she had lost the use of her right hand (through a stroke) during most of the last 3 months of her life.

U Win Htoon said that Ma Khin Sandi's attitudes of friendliness and aversion toward other persons corresponded to those of Daw Khin Mya. For example, Daw Khin Mya had fallen out with one of her sisters-in-law, and Ma Khin Sandi would not allow this woman to carry her. In contrast, she showed a keen interest in U Tin Tut, who had been U Win Htoon's supervisor at the American Embassy and a person of whom Daw Khin Mya had been fond.

THE CASE OF BIR SAHAI

Introduction

A report of this case was sent to K.K.N. Sahay sometime in the 1920s by a correspondent, who had himself investigated the case. The writer of the report was a circuit judge who had come across the case during one of his tours. K.K.N. Sahay (c. 1927) published seven cases that he had investigated himself; but the report of the present one remained among his unpublished papers, and a copy eventually reached me through the courtesy of his son, Jagdish Chandra. The name of the enquiring judge who wrote the report is not given on the copy I have; but he was evidently a careful person who wrote down what he had learned about the case from firsthand witnesses.

I mentioned in the report of Nirankar Bhatnagar's case that Dr. Satwant Pasricha and I traced and investigated 36 Indian cases the subjects of which were born before 1936 (Pasricha and Stevenson, 1987). Bir Sahai was the subject of one of these cases, and I was particularly eager to meet him, if he was still living, because the report from the 1920s mentioned that he had a prominent birthmark on his back, which corresponded with the lesion of a carbuncle from which the man whose life he remembered had died. We succeeded in finding Bir Sahai and

Figure 7-11 Birthmark on the left upper back of Bir Sahai as it appeared in March 1979, when he was probably about 70 years old. The natural color of the birthmark was reddish purple. It was irregularly ovoid in shape and approximately 3 centimeters long and 2 centimeters wide. The center was slightly depressed and darker than the peripheral area.

learned also that his case had other interesting features apart from his birthmark (Figure 7-11).

Summary of the Case from the Report of the Late 1920s[7]

The report is not dated, but from internal evidence it appears to have been written soon after K.K.N. Sahay published (in about 1927) his report of the seven

[7]In what follows I have inserted a few geographical details and other explanations, based on what I learned later, in order to make the summary of the report more intelligible.

cases that he had investigated himself. The report refers to Bir Sahai as being a boy, but also as being a good workman. From this I infer that he was in his middle teens in 1928. He would therefore have been born around 1912. When we met him in 1979, he said that he was between 65 and 70 years old. He appeared to Dr. Pasricha and me to be somewhat older than 65. This seems to accord roughly with the estimate of his age derived from the report of the 1920s.

Bir Sahai was born in the village of Saunhar, which is about 25 kilometers northeast of Etah, in the state of Uttar Pradesh, India. His parents were Chamars, who are members of one of the lowest castes in India.

When Bir Sahai was about 4, he began to speak about a previous life and to claim that he was Thakur[8] Megh Singh of Nardauli. (Nardauli is another village of the Etah District. It is also north of Etah, but farther west; it is about 40 kilometers from Saunhar.) His family had no acquaintance with people of Nardauli. When Bir Sahai was still quite young, a Thakur of his village ordered Bir Sahai's mother to do some dirty manual labor, such as cleaning up cow dung. Bir Sahai, hearing of this, protested at his mother being asked to work in filth. (In his childlike way he was conferring on her some of the high-caste qualities that he claimed for himself as a Thakur.) The Thakur became angry at this and abused Bir Sahai. Undaunted, Bir Sahai said that he would get people from Nardauli who would punish the Thakur for his impertinence. This made the other villagers ask Bir Sahai to explain his connection with Nardauli, and news of his memories of a previous life then spread through the village. It spread farther also, and eventually reached Nardauli, where the mother of Thakur Megh Singh learned about Bir Sahai and sent for him to come there.

In Nardauli, Bir Sahai recognized Megh Singh's mother and wife from among about 100 other women. He also recognized Megh Singh's gun and spear as well as two persons known to Megh Singh. (The report gives no details of how these recognitions occurred, but its writer had taken testimony about them from two members of his staff who had been firsthand witnesses of most of the events described up to this point.)

Megh Singh's family were *zamindars* (prosperous tax farmers and landowners) and Thakurs, who would consider themselves far above Chamars in worldly status. Bir Sahai's statements and recognitions nevertheless impressed them so much that they kept him with them, treated him as a member of their family, and gave him some land.

Megh Singh had been renowned as a hunter. He had also been a person of immense popularity.

The report concluded by saying that the writer had seen "a big scar near the spine of Bir Sahai. This is the scar of the carbuncle from which Megh Singh died."

[8]Thakurs are members of a high caste, the Kshatriyas, being second only to Brahmins in the caste scale in the part of India where this case occurred. In claiming to be a Thakur, Bir Sahai, born a Chamar, was therefore disturbing the settled order of things in his village.

Megh Singh's age at death was given as 22 years, and the interval between his death and Bir Sahai's birth as about 2 years.

The Investigation of 1979

Dr. Pasricha and I went first to Saunhar expecting to find Bir Sahai there, if he was still living. It never occurred to us that Megh Singh's family had fully adopted him and kept him all these years in Nardauli; but this, we learned in Saunhar, was exactly what they had done.

Bir Sahai, however, was still remembered in Saunhar. Not everyone who volunteered to speak there was qualified by having known Bir Sahai personally, but we found one informant who was. This man, Mauji Ram, said that he was 65 years old, but claimed also to be about 10 or 15 years older than Bir Sahai. (He might have been a little older than Bir Sahai, in which case he would have been in his 70s.) He remembered Bir Sahai saying that in the previous life his (Megh Singh's) wedding party had camped under the trees outside the village of Saunhar. Megh Singh's wife came from Malawan, which is the nearest town (of any substance) to Saunhar. (Malawan is on the Grand Trunk Road, which, in this part of India, links Etah and Kanpur.) Bir Sahai's statement about the encampment of Megh Singh's wedding party is thus geographically plausible.

Mauji Ram also recalled that Bir Sahai had said that in the previous life he had died from a boil. (The Hindi word *phora* more properly refers to a boil or furuncle, but a carbuncle may be regarded as a monster furuncle, so Mauji Ram's use of the word *phora*—he was after all no medical man, but a villager—was appropriate enough.) Mauji Ram also recalled Bir Sahai's birthmark, although he indicated (by pointing) that both Megh Singh's carbuncle, which he could never have seen, and Bir Sahai's birthmark were rather higher on the back than the birthmark actually was.

A much younger informant than Mauji Ram, Rati Ram, said that Bir Sahai had moved to Nardauli only about 20 years before our visit in 1979. This was incorrect information; Bir Sahai said that he had been brought to Nardauli when "quite young" and had never returned to Saunhar. Other informants in Nardauli concurred that once Bir Sahai had come there, he had never returned to Saunhar.

Dr. Pasricha and I needed another day to go to Nardauli, which is even less accessible than Saunhar. We found Bir Sahai there, living in his adoptive home. At the time of our visit he was ill in bed and had a fever, but he graciously answered our questions and even stood up so that I could examine and photograph his birthmark. The head of the family where Bir Sahai lived was Mohender Singh, who was the son of Megh Singh's nephew. Unfortunately, Mohender Singh was away from Nardauli on the day of our visit; but we obtained some information from his nephew Rachpal Singh and from Bir Sahai himself.

Bir Sahai had been educated up to the level of the third grade, which he reached when he was about 10 years old or more. He had thereafter worked all his life as a cultivator. He had never married. From his conviction that he was a

Thakur he would not marry a girl of lower caste. However, since he had been born in a Chamar family—even though he had been adopted by a prominent Thakur family of Nardauli—other Thakur families regarded him as a Chamar, and they would not let their daughters marry him. So he lived and died a bachelor, trapped by the caste system.

Comment. One could argue that when Megh Singh's family accepted Bir Sahai as Megh Singh reborn and brought him to live as one of their own family, they may have made his life less happy than it might have been if he had remained a Chamar in his own village. By endorsing his claim to be a Thakur, they must have intensified his own inflexible conviction that he was a Thakur; and this meant, for a caste purist, that any bride of a lower caste was unfit for him. Perhaps Megh Singh's family thought to persuade other Thakur families to accept Bir Sahai as fully as they had themselves; if so, they underestimated the strength of caste feeling in their region at that time.

On the other hand, in material circumstances Bir Sahai was better off as a member of a prominent, landowning family of Nardauli than he would have been had he remained in a poor Chamar family of Saunhar.

Rachpal Singh had learned something about Bir Sahai's case from his uncle, Mohender Singh. He was familiar with the outlines of the opening episode of the case narrated in the report of the late 1920s. According to him, Bir Sahai, upon being scolded by a Thakur of Saunhar, had said: "Why do you say that? I am a Thakur also."

Rachpal Singh said that Megh Singh had been married about 10 years when he died and had had three children. He thought he was about 30 years old at the time of his death.

Bir Sahai's Birthmark

Figure 7-11 shows the birthmark on Bir Sahai's upper back to the left of the spine, as it appeared in March 1979. Looking at the birthmark, I could feel no surprise at its having been described as a "scar," because it closely resembled the scar left by a furuncle or carbuncle that has healed.

The birthmark was irregularly ovoid in shape and approximately 3 centimeters long and 2 centimeters wide. Its natural color was reddish purple. The center was slightly depressed and darker than the peripheral area.

Bir Sahai said that the birthmark was not discharging when he was born and that its appearance had not changed since his birth. (I doubt whether he himself had ever seen it, but other persons must often have looked at it and described it to him.) He had never had any pain or other discomfort in the area of the birthmark.

Since furuncles and carbuncles occur commonly in persons with untreated diabetes mellitus, I asked Bir Sahai whether anyone in his family had had diabetes mellitus, but he did not know. (He may not have understood the question.)

Bir Sahai's general health had been good until about 4 years prior to our visit to him in 1979. (I note an exception below.) At that time he began to suffer

from furuncles, and he had had about four of these over a period of 3 or 4 years. These furuncles were not, however, at the site of his birthmark. They were on the other side of his chest in the area of the upper part of his sternum. When I examined him in 1979, he appeared to have in that area a small sinus, which was presumably a residue of such a furuncle.

Bir Sahai's Near-Death Experience

In about 1970 Bir Sahai almost died (from what illness I did not learn). During the period when he was ostensibly unconscious, he found himself taken in hand by two men and brought to a paradisal place. (Such men, called Yamdoots in India, are agents of Yamraj, the God of Death.) At the place to which he was taken he was told (by a rather stout man) that his time had not yet come, and he was sent back to continue his terrestrial life. He then recovered. He did not know of anyone else who had died at about the same time.

Comment. Bir Sahai's near-death experience included a feature that Dr. Pasricha and I have found in other near-death experiences in India, including that of Durga Jatav, which I described in Chapter 2. I refer to the suggestion that the deceased or nearly deceased person has been wrongly "picked up" by the Yamdoots. The error is detected and then rectified by sending the person back to continue his or her terrestrial life. Sometimes another person (presumably the person intended to die, according to this interpretation) dies at the time the person who nearly dies recovers (Pasricha, 1995; Pasricha and Stevenson, 1986).

Bir Sahai's Death

On a visit to Nardauli in December 1980, Dr. Pasricha learned that Bir Sahai died soon after our meeting with him, in April 1979.

Comment on the "Geographical Factor" in the Case

If we suppose this case best interpreted as an instance of reincarnation, Megh Singh's presumed reincarnation in Saunhar, far away from his village of Nardauli, requires an explanation. We can perhaps furnish this by remembering that Megh Singh's wedding party had camped outside Saunhar. His wife came from the nearest town, Malahan. After Megh Singh's death, she might have returned to Malahan, her native village, as some widows in India do. If the discarnate Megh Singh had then tried to rejoin her, he might have got himself "accidentally reborn," so to speak, in Saunhar.

Other instances of a geographical factor occurred in the cases of Maung Aye Kyaw and Lalitha Abeyawardena.

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Birthmarks Corresponding to Other Types of Wounds or Marks on Deceased Persons

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter I present a somewhat heterogeneous group of cases that did not seem to fit appropriately into the previous chapters. The cases of this chapter further demonstrate the large variety of birthmarks corresponding to wounds and marks on deceased persons. In these cases also, no violent deaths occurred, and the wounds or marks to which the birthmarks corresponded had, with one exception (Ma Chit Chit Than), no connection with the deaths of the previous personalities. Most of them occurred years before the previous personality died.

In more than half the cases of this chapter the birthmark or birthmarks of the subject corresponded to holes pierced for earrings worn by the previous personality. I furnish a brief introduction to these cases later in the chapter.

CASE REPORTS

THE CASE OF SANTOSH SUKLA

Summary of the Case and Its Investigation

Santosh Sukla was born in the village of Panchwati, District Sitapur, Uttar Pradesh, India, on July 3, 1950.[1] Her parents were Ambika Prasad Sukla and his wife, Shiv Devi. Santosh was their first child; they subsequently had four other children, two more daughters and two sons. Ambika Prasad and his wife were Brahmins. He was employed as an unskilled worker in a sugar mill at the time I met him in 1971. Despite his humble economic position, Ambika Prasad had sufficient education (and sufficient Brahmin culture) to read passages of the Hindu scriptures every day.

Santosh passed her childhood in Panchwati, but in 1965 her family moved to another village, Kachura, which is in the same postal area as Panchwati.

Santosh began to speak when she was about 1 year old, and when she was between 1½ and 2 years old, she started to refer to a previous life, saying that her name was Maya and that she was from Sitapur, a small city about 25 kilometers away. She asked to be taken there, saying that she had there a father (whose name she gave as Sidh Gopal) and a mother. She also referred to someone called Madhuri, who, she said, would eat up all her food. She spoke of a box she had at the home in Sitapur and described its contents. Santosh's statements led her parents to believe that she was remembering the previous life of a girl called Maya, who was a distant cousin and who had died about 2 years before Santosh's birth. Maya had predicted that she would be reborn in the Sukla family. Nevertheless, Ambika Prasad and Shiv Devi seemed in no rush to take Santosh to Sitapur.

When Santosh was about 2½ or 3 years old, her younger brother had to be taken to Sitapur for medical treatment, and Santosh, learning of this, asked to be taken there also. Her father therefore took her to the hospital in Sitapur where her brother was being treated, and she recognized there a doctor who, she said, had treated her in the previous life she was remembering. On this same visit to Sitapur, Santosh met Maya's father, Sidh Gopal Bajpai, but seems not to have recognized him, at any rate explicitly. (I shall describe this meeting further in a later section.) Santosh was not taken to Maya's house on this first visit to Sitapur.

[1]Different informants gave dates over a wide range for the year of Santosh's birth. Her mother said that she was born in July 1952, and a school certificate put her year of birth back into 1947. Her father, Ambika Prasad, said she was born on July 3, 1950, and I have accepted his date, but without full confidence. The villagers of India (and elsewhere), although often vague in connecting events in their lives with calendars (whether Asian or Western), are usually reliable in narrating the sequence of events with which they are directly concerned. In the present case, Ambika Prasad learned of the death of Maya, the previous personality, soon after it occurred, and he said that Santosh was born about 2 years after Maya's death. However, his estimates of the interval between Maya's death and a dream about her that he had (which I shall describe later) and of the interval between that dream and Santosh's birth amount together to only 15 months, not 24.

However, she insisted on going there, and so her father took her again to Sitapur (this time with her mother), about 6 weeks after the first visit. On this second visit she found her way through part of the town to the house occupied by Maya's family during her lifetime. It happened that the family had sold that house and moved to another one in 1950, and Santosh was taken there. At these houses Santosh recognized members of Maya's family and former neighbors.

Shortly after this second visit to Sitapur, Santosh was invited to Oel, the large town from which Maya's mother came and where she (Maya's mother) was then staying with her family. Santosh was taken there with her father and Maya's father, Sidh Gopal Bajpai. In Oel she made further recognitions of members of Maya's family. All these events took place when she was still only about 3 years old.

This case never received any newspaper publicity, and it remained unknown outside the people immediately concerned until it came to the attention (early in 1970) of Dr. L. P. Mehrotra, who was then assisting me with the study of cases in India. Dr. Mehrotra sent me some preliminary information about the case, including the detail that Maya had had prominent "red lines" in her eyes and that Santosh had similar "red lines" in her eyes (Figure 8-1).

In November 1971, Dr. Mehrotra and I (accompanied by K. S. Rawat) went to the area of the case, where we met Santosh's parents and also Maya's father.

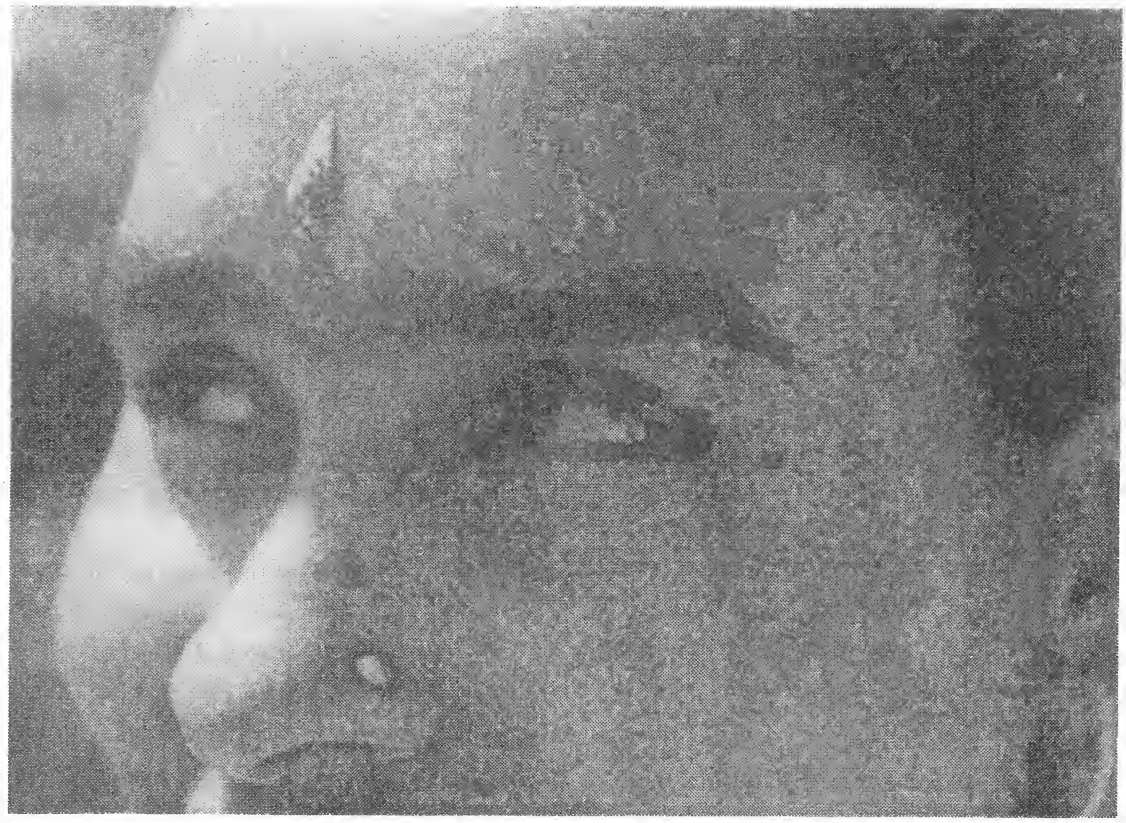

Figure 8-1 Eyes of Santosh Sukla as they appeared in October 1975, when she was 25 years old. The left side of the sclera of the left eye had prominent arterioles.

However, Santosh, who was then 21 years old, had married, and she was living in another community with her husband.

Although the case was already old, the memories of the informants we met seemed on the whole satisfactory for the events they were remembering, and I thought the case worth further investigation. In 1974 Dr. Mehrotra (accompanied by Manjula Kamal) met Santosh in Sitapur and recorded (on tape) a long interview with her. (Santosh then said that she still remembered the details of the previous life.) Finally, in October 1975, I myself (accompanied by Dr. Satwant Pasricha and Chandra Prakash) met Santosh in Sitapur, where she was then living. We also had a further interview with Sidh Gopal Bajpai and obtained a little additional information from one of Maya's sisters, Chitra. (None of our team ever interviewed Maya's mother.)

Persons Interviewed during the Investigation

In Kachura we interviewed:

Shiv Devi, Santosh's mother

In Maholi we interviewed:

Ambika Prasad Sukla, Santosh's father

In Sitapur we interviewed:

Santosh Sukla
Sidh Gopal Bajpai, Maya's father
Chitra, Maya's younger sister

In preparing this report I have also made use of the transcript of Dr. Mehrotra's tape-recorded interview with Santosh in 1974.

Relevant Facts of Geography and Possibilities for Normal Means of Communication between the Two Families

Sitapur is a city of western Uttar Pradesh that had, I estimate, between 50,000 and 100,000 inhabitants at the time this case developed. It is the administrative capital of a district.

Maholi is a large village or small town about 22 kilometers west of Sitapur on the road to Shahjahanpur. I met Ambika Prasad Sukla at the sugar mill there, where he was employed. In the region of Maholi are situated the village of Panchwati, where Santosh was born, and that of Kachura, where her family lived from 1965 on, and where I met Santosh's mother, Shiv Devi. Oel, the native town of Maya's mother (and where Maya was born), is about the same distance as Maholi from Sitapur but farther to the north, along the road to Lakhimpur.

The two families concerned in this case were distantly related through marriage. According to Sidh Gopal Bajpai, Santosh's mother was a first cousin of his

(Sidh Gopal's) first wife. She, however, had died childless, and Maya was Sidh Gopal's child by his second wife, Vidyawati.

The two families were well acquainted. Maya once spent a month at Ambika Prasad's home, when she was ill. Sometimes when Ambika Prasad was in Sitapur, he would visit Sidh Gopal's house, and he would have seen Maya there. Shiv Devi said that she and her husband had had no special attachment to Maya, but this was not her husband's view. (I spoke with them separately.) Ambika Prasad said that Maya had had a special regard for him, and he felt the same toward her. Shiv Devi recalled hearing Maya say that her father did not look after her as well as her "Mausa." The word *mausa* means the husband of the mother's sister. Because Sidh Gopal's first wife had been a cousin of Santosh's mother and because Indians may call cousins sisters, Ambika Prasad was (loosely speaking) Maya's mausa, and she referred to him with that word. Maya also predicted to Ambika Prasad and Shiv Devi that she would reincarnate as their child. In view of the friendship between the two families, it would be best to consider that nearly all of Santosh's statements about the previous life referred to matters normally known to her parents.

Both families concerned in this case were Brahmins, but there were considerable differences in their economic conditions. Santosh's family were poor villagers living in a kachcha (clay) house. Sidh Gopal's family were urbanites of moderate means.

The Life, Death, and Character of Maya

Maya (whose full name, Maya Devi, I have shortened) was born in Oel in May 1933. She was the oldest child of her parents, Sidh Gopal Bajpai and his wife, Vidyawati. They subsequently had seven other children. Sidh Gopal worked as a clerk in a jewelry shop in Sitapur, where they lived. (Vidyawati came from Oel and returned to her native village for Maya's birth.)

Maya attended school, and she received part of her schooling in her mother's village of Oel.

When Maya was 14, her father proposed to get her married. (This was not an excessively young age for girls to be married in Indian villages.) Maya seems to have shown different attitudes about the proposed marriage to her parents and to Ambika Prasad and his wife, and I shall therefore separate their accounts of the last days of Maya's life.

According to Sidh Gopal (Maya's father), Maya told a friend that her father was taking too much trouble in arranging her marriage because it would not take place. (She seems not to have expressed opposition to the marriage as such.) At about this time Maya's mother became ill, and when she recovered, Maya herself became ill with a fever. Sidh Gopal called in the family doctor, Dr. Shamsunderlal Misra; but his efforts were unavailing, and Maya died after an illness lasting 10 or 11 days. The word *typhoid* was applied to the illness, but this does not mean that Maya died of typhoid fever as it would be diagnosed in Western medicine; Indian villagers call many different febrile illnesses "typhoid."

Sidh Gopal remembered that during Maya's last illness she had first been in bed in an upper story of their house. The doctor treating her advised Sidh Gopal to bring her down to the ground floor. (This was equivalent to saying that she would not recover, because it is customary for Hindus who are dying to be put on or near the ground—a symbolic expression of returning to Mother Earth.) As Maya was being carried downstairs, she objected to being moved and said: "I will go to my mausa" (meaning to Ambika Prasad).

According to Ambika Prasad, Maya told him, after her marriage had been arranged, that she did not want to marry; and she said that if she was forced to proceed with the marriage, she "would go away," meaning that she would die. She then added: "I want to live with you."

Shiv Devi also remembered Maya's having said: "When I die, I will go to mausa's house."

Maya did in fact die about 1 month before the date set for her marriage. She died in Sitapur in May 1948.

Sidh Gopal described Maya as having been a simple girl, more inclined to be submissive than dominant. She was pious and frequently performed Hindu *pujas* (rituals of worship). She was generous to beggars. I did not learn about other particular features of her personality.

Two Dreams Related to Maya's Death and Santosh's Birth

On the day Maya died Shiv Devi dreamed of her, and in the dream Maya said: "I have come to you." Shiv Devi narrated the dream to her husband and asked him to go to Sitapur and learn how Maya was. They apparently did not know then that Maya was ill, let alone near death. When Ambika Prasad reached Sitapur, he learned that Maya had died at just about the time of Shiv Devi's dream.

About 6 months later, Ambika Prasad himself dreamed of Maya. In the dream he was standing at the door of his house. Maya was there and said: "Mausa, I have come." This dream woke him up, and he said to Shiv Devi: "Maya has come." Shiv Devi asked him what he was saying and added: "Are you dreaming? Are you talking in your sleep? Maya is not here." According to Ambika Prasad's memory in 1971, Santosh was born 9 months later.

Statements and Recognitions Made by Santosh

In Table 8-1 I have listed all that I learned of Santosh's statements about the previous life and the recognitions attributed to her with sufficient detail in the informants' descriptions to warrant their inclusion. Items 1-14 (with the exception of item 8) were stated by Santosh before her first visit to Sitapur. I placed item 8 for convenience along with the other statements Santosh made about a box Maya had had in Sitapur; but Santosh seems not to have said from where Maya obtained the box until she was actually examining it and its contents at Sidh Gopal's house in Sitapur.

Item 15 occurred on the occasion of Santosh's first visit to Sitapur. Santosh appears to have made this recognition spontaneously, although we cannot exclude the possibility that Ambika Prasad had told her (or mentioned in her presence) that they were going to meet Dr. Misra, the man she recognized. On this same first visit to Sitapur, Ambika Prasad took Santosh to the shop where Sidh Gopal worked (but not to Sidh Gopal's house, as Santosh had demanded). At the shop, Sidh Gopal and Santosh looked at each other, but neither spoke, and after a time Ambika Prasad brought her back to their village. When I met Sidh Gopal years later, he could not remember this first meeting with Santosh, although he knew that she had been to his shop several times. I conjecture that he said nothing to Santosh because he was appraising her and perhaps waiting for her to make some spontaneous sign of recognizing him. (That she did not do so is my reason for not including a recognition of Sidh Gopal in Table 8-1.) She, for her part, had recognized him, even though she had not said so at the time. She expected him to say something to her, and when she got back to her home she said that she was angry at Sidh Gopal because he had not spoken to her; she was so annoyed with him that she said she would never go to his house.[2]

However, Santosh soon forgot this resolution and began saying that she wanted to go to Sitapur again to see her (previous) mother and to bring back her (Maya's) box before the people there (Maya's family, presumably) broke its contents. On her second visit to Sitapur, Santosh recognized the old house of Maya's family, Malti (a neighbor still living in the area), and Maya's younger brother Sharawan Kumar, alias Munwa (items 16-18). Someone sent word to Sidh Gopal of Santosh's arrival, and he came to the house. On this occasion, Santosh recognized him more explicitly by saying about him: "He is my father." Shiv Devi and Ambika Prasad remembered that Santosh had referred to Sidh Gopal as *Pitaji* (a common term for father); but Sidh Gopal remembered that she had used the word *Bapu* (another word for father) in recognizing him, and because this was the term Maya had used in addressing him, he was moved to tears. (She may have used both terms at different times; I have not listed this meeting and Santosh's recognition of Sidh Gopal in Table 8-1, because she had already met him a few weeks earlier in his shop.)

Sidh Gopal then took Santosh and her parents to the house he was currently occupying. There she recognized Maya's brother by name (item 18) and her paternal uncle (item 19). Santosh asked where her (Maya's) mother was and was told that she was then at her father's house in Oel. Santosh also asked for the box to which she had referred before coming to Sitapur, and it was brought out. (Shiv Devi and Sidh Gopal differed in their recollections of whether the items Santosh had mentioned were then still in the box or not; Sidh Gopal said that they had

[2]Santosh belongs to a group of subjects whose identification with the previous personality is so strong that it includes an assumption that persons who knew them in the previous life should effortlessly recognize them in this life; in this expectation they completely overlook the difference in body size, let alone other features, between the deceased person and themselves. Other examples of an unthinking conviction on the part of subjects that they should be easily recognized as the person they believe themselves to have been occurred in the cases of Zouheir Chaar and Rabih Elawar.

Table 8-1 **Summary of Statements and Recognitions Made by Santosh**

Item	*Informants*	*Verification*	*Comments*
1. Her name was Maya.	Shiv Devi, Santosh's mother Ambika Prasad Sukla, Santosh's father	Sidh Gopal Bajpai, Maya's father	
2. Her father was called Sidh Gopal.	Shiv Devi	Sidh Gopal Bajpai	
3. Her father was at Sitapur.	Shiv Devi Ambika Prasad Sukla	Sidh Gopal Bajpai	
4. He lived in Mohalla Loharbagh.	Shiv Devi	Sidh Gopal Bajpai	*Mohalla* is the Hindi word for a quarter of a town or city.
5. Her mother was there.	Ambika Prasad Sukla	Sidh Gopal Bajpai	
6. Madhuri was there.	Shiv Devi	Sidh Gopal Bajpai	Santosh may not have said what relationship Madhuri had to Maya. Madhuri was Maya's younger sister.
7. She had a box at Sitapur.	Shiv Devi Ambika Prasad Sukla	Sidh Gopal Bajpai	
8. She had obtained the box from her grandfather's house in Oel.	Shiv Devi	Unverified	It was correct, however, that Maya's maternal grandfather lived in Oel; so she may have obtained the box from his house there.
9. In the box were her earrings, a red sari, and a silver belt.	Shiv Devi	Sidh Gopal Bajpai	

10.	She had other clothes and books there.	Ambika Prasad Sukla	See comment	I did not verify this item directly, but it is almost certainly correct. Maya would have had several or many items of clothes; and as a schoolgirl she must also have had books.
11.	Her mother became ill.	Shiv Devi	Sidh Gopal Bajpai	
12.	She held a pot of water, moved it around her mother, and prayed that her mother might become well and that she herself would die; then she drank the water.	Shiv Devi	Unverified	Sidh Gopal Bajpai knew (or remembered) nothing of Maya's having performed such a ritual.
13.	Her mother became well and she became ill, of fever.	Shiv Devi	Sidh Gopal Bajpai	
14.	Her father called Dr. Shamsunder, who treated her and said he could do no more; then she died.	Shiv Devi	Sidh Gopal Bajpai	The full name of the doctor was Shamsunderlal Misra; he was familiarly called Dr. Bhaiya. *Bhai* means brother in Hindi.
15.	Recognition of Dr. Shamsunderlal Misra	Ambika Prasad Sukla		This recognition occurred spontaneously when Santosh's father took her to Dr. Misra's hospital (where he had earlier left Santosh's brother for treatment). When Santosh saw Dr. Misra, she said "He is Dr. Bhaiya." (See comment to item 14.) Then she added: "He treated me last year and then I died." The phrase *last year* seems inappropriate here, and is certainly incorrect for the time interval between

Table 8-1 *(continued)*

Item	*Informants*	*Verification*	*Comments*
			Maya's death and Santosh's statement, which was about 5 years. It is possible that Santosh collapsed the interval in her memory; it is also possible that, at the age of 3, she had not developed the ability to express a lapse of 5 years in time.
16. Recognition of house in Sitapur where Maya had lived	Ambika Prasad Sukla		This recognition occurred on Santosh's second visit to Sitapur. Her parents let her walk ahead at a point some distance from the house. (I did not learn the length of the distance.) Santosh, walking about 15 meters in front of her parents, led the way across several lanes and stopped at the house. Maya's family were no longer living there, but some other persons came out, and Santosh recognized one of them (see next item).
17. Recognition of Malti, daughter of Pandit Ram Bharose, a neighbor of Maya's family	Ambika Prasad Sukla Shiv Devi		This recognition occurred soon after Santosh and her parents had reached the house where Maya's family had formerly lived. When Santosh saw Malti, she said: "Oh, Malti, you have become so big."
18. Recognition of Maya's younger brother Sharawan Kumar, alias Munwa	Shiv Devi Sidh Gopal Bajpai		This recognition also occurred at the time of Santosh's second visit to Sitapur, while she and her parents were still at the house formerly occupied by Maya's family. Sharawan Kumar learned of Santosh's arrival and went to the family's old house. When he saw

Santosh, he began to laugh. Santosh then playfully slapped him, remarking that he was still naughty. Shiv Devi was our informant for this recognition.
Sidh Gopal Bajpai described another recognition of Sharawan Kumar. It occurred a little later (on the same visit to Sitapur), after the party moved to the house then occupied by Maya's family. There, Santosh recognized Sharawan Kumar more explicitly. Sidh Gopal, indicating Sharawan Kumar, asked Santosh: "Who is he?" Santosh replied: "He is my younger brother Munwa." "Munwa" was Sharawan Kumar's pet name.
For the second more explicit recognition, I cannot exclude the possibility that someone had spoken Munwa's name in Santosh's presence before Sidh Gopal asked her: "Who is he?"

19.	Recognition of Maya's paternal uncle, Jai Dayal	Sidh Gopal Bajpai

This recognition also occurred at Sidh Gopal's new house, just after the preceding item. Sidh Gopal indicated Jai Dayal and asked Santosh: "Who is he?" She replied: "He is my Bappah," once again using the familiar name by which Maya had addressed the person recognized. (*Bappah* could refer to a father, grandfather, or any senior adult male.)

20.	Recognition of Maya's maternal uncle, Bishambhar Dayal	Sidh Gopal Bajpai Ambika Prasad Sukla

This recognition took place at the railway station of Oel, to which Santosh and her father went by train, accompanied by Sidh Gopal. Bishambhar Dayal had come to the station to meet the party,

Table 8-1 *(continued)*

Item	*Informants*	*Verification*	*Comments*
			and when he looked into the train compartment where Santosh was sitting (just after the train arrived), she said: "He is my *mama*." Her use of the word *mama* indicated her understanding that Bishambhar Dayal was Maya's *maternal* uncle. (He was Vidyawati's brother.) Ambika Prasad Sukla, although he was a firsthand witness of this recognition, misremembered the name of Maya's uncle as "Surender."
21. Recognition of another of Maya's uncles, Triveni Prasad	Sidh Gopal Bajpai		From the railway station at Oel (after the incident of the preceding item), Santosh was taken to the home of Maya's mother's family. Triveni Prasad was standing at the door of the house, and when Santosh saw him she said: "He is Pandit mama." This had been Maya's way of referring to this senior maternal uncle. *(Pandit* is an honorific of Brahmins.)
22. Recognition of Maya's maternal grandmother	Sidh Gopal Bajpai		Inside the house Santosh saw Maya's maternal grandmother and said: "She is my Ammaji," again using a familiar name, that by which Maya addressed her mother's mother. *(Amma* is a word for mother and *Ammaji* [meaning much respected mother] may be used for a grandmother.)
23. Recognition of Maya's mother, Vidyawati	Sidh Gopal Bajpai		After recognizing Maya's grandmother (see previous item), Santosh went to Maya's mother

				and said: "She is my *mataji*." *(Mataji* means "respected mother.") Santosh then sat in Vidyawati's lap, felt her whole body, and said: "You have become thin and feeble. You should consult Dr. Bhaiyaji." This remark affected Vidyawati so much that she fainted.
24.	Recognition of one of Maya's saris	Sidh Gopal Bajpai		Maya's sister Madhuri brought this sari into Santosh's presence, perhaps intending to show it to Santosh. (Santosh said in 1974 that Madhuri had the sari on, but Sidh Gopal did not mention this.) As soon as Santosh saw the sari, she snatched it from Madhuri. Then, almost immediately, she gave it back, telling Madhuri that it was too big for her (Santosh) and Madhuri could keep it.
25.	Recognition of site of school attended by Maya in Oel	Sidh Gopal Bajpai		There had been a school at a temple in Oel, but the temple had been almost demolished. Someone asked Santosh what had been there, and she said: "There was a school, and I used to study in it."
26.	"Pandit mama" taught her in the school at Oel.	Sidh Gopal Bajpai	Sidh Gopal Bajpai	This remark immediately followed that of the preceding item. Triveni Prasad (the Pandit mama of item 21) had been a teacher in the school during Maya's period there.
27.	She had once gone to Hardwar with Sidh Gopal.	Sidh Gopal Bajpai	Unverified	I think this statement was correct, but my notes do not make this clear. (Hardwar, near the source of the Ganges River, is a celebrated place of pilgrimage for Hindus.)

been, but Shiv Devi thought the box was nearly empty.) Santosh said she would like to take the box with her (back to Panchwati), but in the end she did not do so.

The remaining items in Table 8-1 (items 20-27) are recognitions and two further statements that Santosh made when she was taken to Oel (Maya's mother's village) about 10 days later. She spent about 3 days in Oel.

Informants credited Santosh with recognizing several other persons, but I did not learn sufficient details about these recognitions to feel justified in listing them in the table.

Comment. My readers already know that, in general, I attach much less importance to recognitions attributed to the subject than most informants for these cases do; however, some of Santosh's recognitions seem to me to have more than average value, either because she used a familiar name for the person recognized or because she immediately afterward and spontaneously made some appropriate comment about the person recognized.

Santosh's Statements about Experiences after Maya's Death and before Her Birth. Santosh, as a young child, gave her mother a somewhat circumstantial account of experiences she claimed to remember after dying as Maya. I give next a portion of my notes from my interview with Shiv Devi in 1971:

> She also said that after dying she was taken by four persons to a river and was immersed. She cried, and then she was taken up to a village where there were many fruit trees and gardens. There was a person there in yellow clothes sitting on a wooden bed. She [Maya] sat down there, against a pillar and remained [for some time]. There were many persons there, and they used to pluck the fruit and eat them; but she just watched these persons. Then she was asked if she would eat; she accepted and they gave her some fruit. She remained there for a year and was then born here [in the Sukla family].

It is appropriate to mention in this section Santosh's explanation for why she had been born in the Sukla family instead of elsewhere. When Ambika Prasad asked her why she had come to his house, she replied: "I like you. You fast often, and so I wanted to live with you."

Santosh's Statements in 1974. In her (tape-recorded) interview with Dr. Mehrotra and Manjula Kamal in 1974, Santosh said that she still preserved original imaged memories of the events of the previous life and afterward; she denied that what she told them was derived from what adults said she had said when younger. Be that as it may, Santosh's account of her case in 1974 closely resembled that of her parents 3 years earlier.

Santosh said that she remembered (in the previous life as Maya) predicting her death—both to Shiv Devi (to whom she also predicted rebirth as her child) and to a friend called Shanti. Maya and Shanti were both engaged to be married at about the same time, and they made a friendly bet with each other (of 300 rupees) as to which of them would be married first. Maya said that she would not be married at all. Santosh did not remember, or did not mention in this interview, any

reluctance on the part of Maya to be married, only a conviction that she would not live to be married.

Santosh's account of Maya's experiences just before and after death was somewhat more detailed than that given us by her parents, although she omitted the ritual with water (item 12, Table 8-1) when her mother was ill before Maya herself became ill.

Two details of Santosh's (1974) account of Maya's postmortem experiences are noteworthy. First, she said that a black man (not four persons as in the account given us by Shiv Devi) caught her (in a net) and took her to the realm of discarnates. Second, Santosh emphasized that as Maya (in the discarnate realm) she felt herself to be extremely small in comparison with the other persons there. Santosh said that she had not mentioned to anyone her memories of experiences after Maya's death until she was about 8 or 9 years old, when one of her maternal uncles asked her what happened when she died.[3]

Santosh's Behavior Related to the Previous Life

Circumstances and Manner of Santosh's Speaking about the Previous Life. I did not learn from Santosh's parents about any circumstance that seemed to stimulate her references to the previous life. She herself, however, mentioned in 1974 a stimulus that she remembered. Her father used to read aloud every day from the *Ramayana* (one of the great Indian epics, which is also a religious scripture). In this work the word *maya* occurs frequently; it means "illusion" or "unreality," and refers, according to Hinduism, to the error of mistaking the perceptions of terrestrial life for the ordinarily unperceived reality behind them. Santosh said that hearing the word *maya* aroused her memories of the previous life (as Maya) and that this happened every time she heard the word. She recalled asking her parents to call her "Mainua," which was as close as she could then come (being only 2½ years old) to pronouncing the word *Maya*. Ambika Prasad had told me (in 1971) that he remembered Santosh asking to be called Maya, but he had refused to do this, because he was still at that time shocked and saddened by the death of Maya. He did not then think that Santosh was the dead Maya reborn; it was only later that Santosh began to say that she was from Sitapur and to mention other details of Maya's life. (The dreams mentioned above that he and Shiv Devi had had seem not to have significantly influenced him toward concluding that Santosh was Maya reborn.)

[3]No one knows how much information has been lost from these cases because adults failed to ask the subjects appropriate questions. The adults' questions can certainly guide the children in undesirable ways and even encourage the narration of fantasies. On the other hand, many of the children regard their memories as private matters, and they share them only with persons who express respectful interest in them. Gopal Gupta was another subject who said nothing about experiences after death in the previous life he remembered until someone asked him where he had been for the 8 years between that death and his birth. What Gopal said about an "intermediate life" in London remains unverified, but that is beside the point I wish to make here.

Savitri Devi Pathak was another subject who spoke about experiences between death in the previous life she remembered and her birth.

Once fully involved with memories of the life of Maya (or able to express them in words), Santosh showed (compared with other subjects of these cases) an unusually strong identification with the previous personality. Apart from her wish, just mentioned, to be called by Maya's name, Santosh expressed this identification in several ways. One was her insistent demands to be taken to Sitapur. She alleged that her (Maya's) sister Madhuri would eat up all her food (at Sitapur); to reinforce her request to go to Sitapur she refused for a time to take any food in her family's house. And, as I mentioned earlier, she also spoke about a box she had in Sitapur (items 7-9 of Table 8-1) and expressed concern that its contents would be broken up by members of Maya's family.

Santosh also showed marked possessiveness toward the property of Maya and her family. On her second visit to Sitapur, when she led the way to the former house of Sidh Gopal (where Maya had lived), she was surprised and annoyed to find another family living there. She said to them: "Why are you living here? This is my house."[4] (One can easily imagine that the residents, who had legally purchased the house from Sidh Gopal several years earlier, were astonished to find themselves being thus rebuked by a 3-year-old girl they did not know.) When she was taken to Sidh Gopal's new house, she became proprietary toward it. She said: "Bajpai's house is my house." Another instance of Santosh's attachment to Maya's possessions occurred when she saw Maya's sister Madhuri holding one of Maya's saris (item 24, Table 8-1). Santosh snatched it from Madhuri, but then, thinking further, said to her: "It is mine. You wear it. It is too big for me." (In 1974 Santosh recalled that Madhuri had actually been wearing the sari in question and that she [Santosh] had obliged her to take it off. She then kept it to herself for a time.)

When, at the time of Santosh's second visit to Sitapur, Sidh Gopal was so moved that he wept, Santosh said to him: "Why are you weeping? I am in your house."

Santosh's identification with Maya also expressed itself in the way she addressed adults known to Maya. I have given some examples of this in connection with the recognitions listed in Table 8-1. I learned of other similar usages she adopted. She called Vidyawati (Maya's mother) "Mataji" (mother) and her own mother "Jia" (sister). (The latter name has little significance because the other children of Santosh's family also called their mother "Jia.")[5] A better example occurred in her habitually addressing the wife of Maya's brother Munwa as "Bahu," which means daughter-in-law, but is sometimes used with a younger sis-

[4]I learned of this remark from Sidh Gopal who was following behind Santosh. He may not have heard her make the remark, but learned of it a few minutes later. In 1974 Santosh herself remembered the episode clearly and said that she had shouted at the occupants of the house that they should vacate it.

Maung Zaw Thein Lwin was another subject who showed an attitude of proprietorship toward a building in which the person (U Mar Din) whose life he remembered had an interest; U Mar Din had been a mason responsible for repairs of a monastery, and Maung Zaw Thein Lwin deplored how the monastery had been allowed to deteriorate (after U Mar Din's death).

[5]In the large joint family households of India children frequently call their parents by the names used for these persons by the other adults of the household. Younger children imitate the older ones in this respect. It can thus happen that a child will call its mother by a name like "Bhabhi," which means sister-in-law (brother's wife) or "Jia," which means sister.

ter-in-law. Munwa was younger than Maya, but by the time of his meeting with the 3-year-old Santosh he and his wife would have been young adults.

Other Behavior of Santosh Related to the Previous Life. Ambika Prasad said that Santosh was more religious than the other children of the family, and this trait accorded with Sidh Gopal's recollection of Maya as having been unusually pious.

Santosh told Dr. Mehrotra in 1974 that in the life as Maya she had been fond of melons and that she herself was fond of them. However, no other informant had mentioned this similarity in a liking for melons.

Despite the marked difference between the economic circumstances of the two families, Santosh never compared their two houses (favorably or unfavorably), and she never asked to go and live with the previous family. She did, however, remain in contact with them and continued to meet them often up to the year of my meeting with her in 1975.

Physical Resemblances between Maya and Santosh

When Santosh was born, she was noted (her mother said) to have a "red line" in one eye. As she grew older, the "red line" (actually several lines) became less prominent. They were, however, still distinctly visible in 1975, when I photographed them (Figure 8-1). The "red lines" were in fact prominent arterioles running across the sclera (telangiectasia). Santosh (in 1975) had such prominent arterioles on both sides of both eyes, but they were more prominent at the lateral side of the left eye than in other areas of the eyes. No other child in the family had similar prominent blood vessels in the eyes, and neither of Santosh's parents had any.

Both Shiv Devi and Ambika Prasad said that Maya had had a similar "red line" (they spoke of one "red line" only) in one of her eyes, and they mentioned the detail as a birthmark in Santosh derived from the previous life as Maya. I was therefore surprised when, even in response to a leading question, Sidh Gopal told me (in 1971) that he could not remember that Maya had had any prominent "red line" in her eye. However, when I met him again in 1975, I reverted to the subject, this time without a leading question. I simply asked him to comment on any physical similarities between Maya and Santosh that he could remember. He then said that their complexions were similar and that Maya had had "red lines" in her eyes. He thought that Santosh also had such "red lines," but admitted that he had not paid much attention to Santosh's eyes. He was now, however, quite definite that Maya had had "red lines" in *her* eyes.[6] Sidh Gopal said that no one else in his family had prominent "red lines" so far as he

[6]A critic might dismiss Sidh Gopal's later statement that Maya had had "red lines" in her eyes as mere compliance to remove discrepancies in the case. By 1975, he might have learned about our interest in the "red lines" in the eyes from other persons, if not from the question I had asked in 1971. However, I think he may for some reason have forgotten the detail in 1971 and remembered it in 1975. I have encountered other instances of what seem to me entirely innocent "later rememberings" of details an informant had not earlier mentioned to me. It is well to remind ourselves that "we not only tend to forget what we have once remembered but we also tend to remember what we have once forgotten" (Ballard, 1913, p. 1).

knew. However, Maya's younger sister Chitra, who was present when we met Sidh Gopal in 1975, mentioned that a son of the family (younger than Maya but older than she) had "red lines" in his eyes. (This brother was not then in Sitapur, and so I was unable to examine him. If Chitra was correct about his having "red lines" in his eyes, there may have been a genetic factor contributing to this abnormality in Maya's family. However, this would not account for the dilated arterioles in Santosh's eyes, because the two families were only related by marriage.)

In 1975 Santosh said that in the life as Maya she had had "red lines" in both eyes, but the lines were more prominent in the left eye than in the right eye; and this was the case with her own eyes. Santosh also repeated what her parents had told us in 1971: No other member of the family had "red lines" in the eyes similar to hers.

Santosh said that her vision was good and that she had no pain in her eyes.

Shiv Devi and Ambika Prasad also said (in 1971) that both Maya and Santosh had more than the usual amount of body hair. Sidh Gopal (also in 1971) could not remember this as a feature of Maya's physique. In 1975 he did not mention this detail spontaneously, and I did not ask him directly about it.

Maya and Santosh seem not to have resembled each other in details of facial appearance apart from the "red lines" in the eyes. Both Shiv Devi and Santosh herself remembered that Maya's eyes had been larger than Santosh's.

Santosh's Later Development

Santosh attended school up to the eighth grade. She then took a course for training teachers and qualified as a teacher. In 1975 she was working as an assistant teacher in a village of the Sitapur District.

In about 1969, when she was 19, Santosh's parents arranged a marriage for her. She was opposed to this and even said that if she were married she "would leave and go somewhere else," meaning that she would die. (This seemed to repeat what Maya had said to Ambika Prasad in the same circumstances.) However, in the end she went through with the marriage without mishap. By 1975 she had two children. Her health, in general, was good.

As I mentioned earlier, Santosh said (in 1975) that she had preserved all of her original imaged memories of the previous life into adulthood. In this respect she differed from the majority of subjects, certainly of Indian subjects, who seem to forget their memories between the ages of 5 and 7 or 8. In 1975 she said that so far as she could tell the only fading of her memories of the previous life concerned her inability (at that time) to recognize neighbors of Maya's family (as from that life). She said that she had earlier been able to do this and that she could still recognize members of Maya's family.

Santosh had continued to meet Maya's family ever since the first meetings when she was about 3 years old. I did not learn how often she visited them, but she was certainly on terms of intimacy with Sidh Gopal and his wife, Vidyawati. In 1974 Santosh told Dr. Mehrotra that Vidyawati was in the habit of confiding the

details of family affairs to her; and in 1975 Sidh Gopal accompanied us when we went to meet Santosh at her home in Sitapur.

Comment. During Santosh's meetings with Maya's family, she would naturally have learned much about Maya (and other members of the family), and some of this information may have overlaid, distorted, and even replaced her original memories of Maya's life. Yet we cannot exclude that the meetings may also have contributed to the continued accessibility in her consciousness of the original imaged memories.

THE CASE OF SAVITRI DEVI PATHAK

Summary of the Case and Its Investigation

Savitri Devi Pathak was born on June 5, 1947,[7] in the village of Ahmedpur, near Sirsaganj in the Mainpuri District of Uttar Pradesh, India. She was the daughter of Pandit Sham Singh and his wife, Phulan Devi. Savitri Devi had a younger sister, Jagriti. Sham Singh was a farmer who lived with his older brother, Komal Singh, in a joint household. They were Brahmins.

Savitri Devi's mother said that she had a black fingernail at the time of her birth; but this received little or no attention until Savitri Devi began to speak about a previous life when she was about 5 years old. (She had begun to speak coherently much earlier, at between 2 and 2½ years of age.)

Savitri Devi said that she had a house in Shikohabad and came from a family of Dhobis (washermen). She did not give a name for the person whose life she seemed to remember, nor for that of her father. She referred to one "Minminia" and said that she had a brother called Nadaria. She explained the mark on her nail by saying that in the previous life an iron weight had dropped on her thumb and left a permanent bruise. Asked how she had died, Savitri Devi said that she had died after drinking some red water drawn from a well.

Savitri Devi made a small number of other statements, and I shall list them later. She also spoke about experiences she claimed to remember between her death in the previous life and her birth.

Although Savitri Devi had not stated many details about the previous life, her uncle Komal Singh thought that he could trace the family to which she seemed to be referring. He therefore went to Shikohabad, but failed on his first effort to find a family with details matching Savitri Devi's statements. Trying again later, he was led to a family of washermen who had had a member having the name

[7]This is the only date of a birth or death of which I am certain in this case. Komal Singh, Savitri Devi's paternal uncle and the head of her family, took it from a diary during our interview in 1971. As I shall explain, all other dates derive from estimates and even guesses.

"Minminia."[8] (This is a nickname meaning "one who speaks through the nose.") The real name of Minminia was Puniya. (She had a cleft palate, which affected the tone of her voice.) She was married to a washerman of Shikohabad called Bhanwar Singh. They had a family of seven children of whom one, Munni, had died some years earlier. Munni had had her left thumbnail injured when a heavy weight had fallen on it accidentally. Some time later (I never learned exactly how long afterward) Munni died of an infectious disease, probably cholera.

Komal Singh took Savitri Devi to Shikohabad, where she met Munni's parents and neighbors and made a number of recognitions and a few other statements that I shall describe later. I do not know how old she was at the time of this visit to Shikohabad, but estimate that she was then between 5 and 7 years old. Savitri Devi herself told me in 1971 that she was about 7 or 8 at the time, but I think she was probably younger.

I first learned of this case—as often happens during these investigations—while I was studying another one in its area. I began investigating it in November 1971. By that time Savitri Devi was 24 years old, married, and living in Agra with her husband. It was easy to find her at the address in Agra that her family in Ahmedpur gave us.

Much more difficult was the tracing of Munni's family, some of the members of which had dispersed. However, by using Komal Singh's method, Dr. Satwant Pasricha and I found some washermen in Shikohabad who gave us an address for Minminia's children, some of whom were then living and working in Delhi. We located them there, and they gave us another address, back in Shikohabad, for Minminia's husband, Bhanwar Singh. We did not succeed in meeting the members of Munni's family until 1974 and 1975, and one of them, Ram Swaroop, was only traced and interviewed by Dr. Pasricha in 1981.

When Komal Singh went to Shikohabad, he did not clearly identify who Minminia was or did not make this clear to us. Savitri Devi had mentioned Minminia, but seems not to have specified that Minminia was the mother of the person whose life she was remembering. As a result, we did not know until we met Minminia's family in 1975 that Savitri Devi was remembering the life of one of her daughters and not that of Minminia herself.

In 1971 Dr. Jamuna Prasad and members of his team (Dr. L. P. Mehrotra and K. S. Yadav) assisted me. In the years between 1974 and 1981, Dr. Pasricha worked with me on the case.

[8]Shikohabad was a city of perhaps 100,000 inhabitants at the time of the development of this case. Komal Singh was able to trace the correct family because a) members of lower castes, such as washermen, tend to live close together in the same quarter of a town or city and b) the nickname "Minminia" is unusual. Thus all Komal Singh had to do was go to the quarter of washermen in Shikohabad and ask whether there had ever been someone called "Minminia" there. I did not learn why he had failed on his first attempt to solve the case.

Persons Interviewed during the Investigation

In Ahmedpur I interviewed:
Sham Singh, Savitri Devi's father
Phulan Devi, Savitri Devi's mother
Komal Singh, Sham Singh's older brother

In Agra I interviewed:
Savitri Devi Pathak

In Shikohabad I interviewed:
Bhanwar Singh, husband (widower) of Puniya (alias Minminia) and father of Munni
Chunni Lal, former neighbor of Bhanwar Singh
Suraj Singh, former neighbor of Bhanwar Singh
Javitri, former neighbor of Bhanwar Singh

In Delhi I interviewed:
Anar Devi, Bhanwar Singh's daughter and Munni's older sister
Asharfi, Munni's oldest sister
Bidhi Ram, Asharfi's husband
Nathu Ram, alias Nathua, Munni's younger brother
Munni, younger sister of the first Munni

The informant named Munni in the above list was born after the first Munni (presumed previous personality of the case) had died. She was given her deceased sister's name. Being much younger than other members of the family, she contributed little information of value.

Puniya, alias Minminia, Munni's mother, had died by the time of the investigations. Dr. Pasricha traced in Etawah another of Munni's brothers, Ram Swaroop. He was older than Munni and should, we thought, have been a valuable informant; however, he proved unhelpful, perhaps because he had left home to join the army when he was 18, before Munni's death.

The members of Munni's family were all illiterate or nearly so. Their knowledge of dates was particularly defective, and they gave varying estimates for some dates and ages of family members concerned in particular events. There was, in particular, a major discrepancy concerning whether Munni's younger brother, Nathu Ram, was alive at the time of her death or not. Her father said that he had been, but Nathu Ram himself thought that he had been born *after* her death. There were variations also in the estimates of Munni's age when she died, and I shall discuss these later.

Nearly all the information we obtained from Savitri Devi's family derived from Komal Singh, who was her father's older brother. In rural Indian families of this period the oldest brother of the family provided leadership and often dominance. It was Komal Singh, not Sham Singh, who traced the previous family and

took Savitri Devi to Shikohabad. Savitri Devi's mother was observing *purdah* (seclusion of women from strangers), and her brother-in-law (Komal Singh) acted as intermediary for our brief interview with her.

Bhanwar Singh, although 70 by the time we finally reached him, appeared to have a satisfactory memory, although some details had escaped him, and he could not recall whether the weight that had dropped on Munni had fallen on her thumb or her toe.

Relevant Facts of Geography and Possibilities for Normal Means of Communication between the Two Families

Shikohabad is a city about 100 kilometers east of Agra, the capital of the District. Sirsaganj is a much smaller town having perhaps 20,000 inhabitants at the time this case developed. It is 12 kilometers east of Shikohabad. Ahmedpur is a small village 2 kilometers west of Sirsaganj and thus 10 kilometers east of Shikohabad.

Savitri Devi's family went often to Shikohabad, which is the *tehsil* town (administrative capital) of the region and the nearest city for shopping that they could not do in Sirsaganj. They had acquaintances in Shikohabad, but no relatives. They employed washermen in Ahmedpur or from Sirsaganj and had no need to have their washing carried as far as Shikohabad. Komal Singh said that no family from Shikohabad had settled in Ahmedpur.

For his part Bhanwar Singh said that he had no connections with Ahmedpur and had never been there, even up to 1975, the year of our interview with him.

Apart from the distance between the places where the two families lived, a wide difference in caste separated them also. Savitri Devi's family were Brahmins, members of the highest caste. They were moderately prosperous cultivators and owned a tube well with a pump for the irrigation of their land; this indicated affluence beyond that of the average Indian farmer.

Munni's family, in contrast, belonged to the Dhobi caste (washermen), one of the lowest in India; and like most Dhobis in India, they were extremely poor.

In some cases in which the two families have lived in different communities I have been able to find some link or possible contact between them; for this case I found none whatever, unless we were to count as such the undoubted fact that the families concerned might have passed or bumped into each other in the bazaar of Shikohabad.

The Life and Death of Munni Singh

Munni Singh was the daughter of Bhanwar Singh and his wife, Puniya (alias Minminia). They had six other children, of whom five survived to adulthood. One died in infancy, and Munni died in childhood. Bhanwar Singh was a Dhobi, but also did some trading. The family was poor, but they eventually built their own house in Shikohabad. At the age of 70 Bhanwar Singh was somewhat uncertain about the order of birth of his children, but it is most likely that Munni

was the third child of the family; she had at the time of her birth an older brother, Ram Swaroop, and an older sister, Asharfi.

Because of her family's vagueness about dates, I have inadequate information about the year of Munni's birth, the year of her death, and her age at death. For all these facts the ground to be trodden is extremely soft, and it will be best if we start on the relatively firm item of Munni's age at death. I obtained estimates of her age at death from four persons who could claim to have firsthand information. Their estimates of this age ranged between 6 and 10 years. However, three of the estimates gave her age as between 8 and 10 years, and I think we would be justified in saying that she was about 9 years old when she died.

The estimates given by members of Munni's family for the year when she died also varied, between 1940 and 1947. Komal Singh said that he himself had not learned an exact date for Munni's death even at the time of verifying Savitri Devi's statements in Shikohabad. However, he had formed the impression that the interval was "not long." I think we might safely say that Munni died in 1946 or 1947, and possibly earlier. This is all a matter of intelligent guesswork, but I suppose that Munni was born in about 1938.

With regard to Savitri Devi's memories (and also her birthmark) the most important event in Munni's short life was an accident that occurred when she was with her father one day as he was weighing some grain on scales. The cord holding the scales broke, and a heavy weight fell off a pan and onto Munni's left thumb. (Many years later Bhanwar Singh could not remember whether the weight had fallen on his daughter's thumb or toe; however, her younger brother said it was a thumb that was injured, although he was unsure about which thumb it was.) I do not know how old Munni was at the time of this accident, but it had nothing to do with her death, which occurred some time later. The damaged nail remained blue for the rest of her life.

Comment. Munni must have had a subungual hematoma, which is a fairly common injury, especially in children and youths (Farrington, 1964). In many instances the affected nail is sloughed off, and a new nail, sometimes of distorted shape, grows out. In cases where the injury occurs to the matrix of the nail, blood may be incorporated in the nail tissue itself and persist in the nail after the injury has otherwise healed (Stone and Mullins, 1963). Because of the tendency for eventual complete recovery, I conjecture that Munni's injury occurred within a year of her death.

Munni's Final Illness. Bhanwar Singh said that Munni developed fever one afternoon and complained of pain in her stomach. She had no vomiting or diarrhea. Her illness was exceedingly brief, and she died within 3 hours of being noticed to be ill. He said that he was at home at the time. Asharfi, Munni's oldest sister, was the only other available firsthand witness with regard to her death. She remembered that Munni developed fever, and she recalled that her older brother, Ram Swaroop, gave her some medicine. Asharfi attributed Munni's death to "possession by a spirit." (Ram Swaroop told Dr. Pasricha that he had not been at home when Munni died.)

Bhanwar Singh said that Munni was "just an ordinary child." She was not notably pious.

Comment. This last observation has a bearing on why, according to Hindu belief, Munni was "promoted" from Dhobi to Brahmin; Hindus would tend to explain such a change by pointing to meritorious conduct on the part of the deceased person.

Statements and Recognitions Made by Savitri Devi

In Table 8-2 I have summarized the more important statements and recognitions attributed by the informants to Savitri Devi. So far as I know, she stated items 1-7 before the two families had met. Items 8-14 occurred during Savitri Devi's first visit to Munni's family at Shikohabad. These include several recognitions and two further statements (items 10 and 14) that she made at Shikohabad.

Perhaps Savitri Devi's most remarkable statement referred to money that she said was hidden near a drain of the house in Shikohabad. When she went to Shikohabad, she correctly pointed to the place where the money had been hidden. (See items 5 and 12 of Table 8-2.) The money had been subsequently dug out by the family after Munni's death. Suraj Singh, a neighbor, and Nathu Ram were both witnesses of Savitri Devi's recognition of the place where the money had been hidden. (I failed to obtain Bhanwar Singh's account of the recognition.)

Savitri Devi spoke to Munni's family about the theft by Munni's brother and sister of some money that had been kept in a cloth (item 14 of Table 8-2). Her knowledge of this episode had impressed Bhanwar Singh. It had perhaps become fixed in Munni's mind because her brother and sister had been beaten for taking the money.

Informants mentioned other recognitions that Savitri Devi had made in Shikohabad, but I do not have enough information about any of these to warrant listing them separately. Although I have referred to the previous personality identified in this case by her name (Munni), I should emphasize that Savitri Devi herself did not state this name.

Savitri Devi's Statements about Experiences between Munni's Death and Her Birth. I mentioned earlier that Komal Singh asked Savitri Devi how she had died in the previous life, and she had said that she died after being "given red water from the well." Komal Singh then asked her: "Where did you go after dying?" Savitri Devi said that she went first to a baba (holy man) with a white beard. My notes (of 1971) continue as follows:

> He remembers the names of everyone. Baba asks questions. "Have you committed such and such crimes?" If you confess you are all right; otherwise you are given a beating. No one wants to come back from that place, everyone wants to stay on. Baba asked me if I would stay there or go back. Out of fear I said that I wanted to go. Then I was pushed down and was born here.[9]

[9]Savitri Devi's memories of her experiences between the death of Munni and her birth resemble the experiences often reported by persons in India who almost die and recover. Such accounts frequently include a sage or a man with a book who appraises the deeds of the dying or dead (Pasricha and Stevenson, 1986). Although Munni, according to Savitri Devi's memories, found it *(continued)*

In 1975 K. S. Yadav accompanied Savitri Devi to a professional photographer in Agra (for photographs of her thumbs). At that time Savitri Devi told K. S. Yadav that she remembered coming to Ahmedpur (presumably after being "pushed down") on her father's (Sham Singh's) shoulder.

Savitri Devi's Statements Made in 1971. I met Savitri Devi at her father-in-law's house in Agra. She was then 24 years old and married to a junior employee of a veterinary hospital.

Savitri Devi was at first reluctant to discuss with us the previous life she had remembered, but her father-in-law, who was present, encouraged her to do so, and she gradually opened up. She said that she still remembered the previous life. It is possible, however, that some of her original imaged memories had become mixed with memories of what she had said earlier and with what others had told her she had said when younger.

The details that she did remember accorded with Komal Singh's statements of what she had said when about 5 years of age. She remembered the injury to Munni's thumb when the weight fell on it. She thought that this had happened when Munni was about 8 or 9 years old and that Munni had been about 14 when she died. She recalled drinking "pink [sic] water from the well," vomiting, and then dying. She also said that she still remembered the baba (of the discarnate realm) and recalled his white beard and yellow robe. She said that she had at first refused to leave the paradisal realm where the baba was, but that he had advised her to go.

Savitri Devi remembered her first visit to Shikohabad and said that she had been put down at the bus station and led the way from there to the house of the previous family. (Readers will recall [see items 10 and 11 of Table 8-2] that, although Munni's family had moved from the house they had occupied in Munni's day, the old and the new houses were close to each other, and Savitri Devi might well have led the way to the quarter of Shikohabad where the Dhobis lived; however, Komal Singh had not mentioned to me that she had done so.) Savitri Devi said that she recognized "everyone," but I did not ask her for particulars of these recognitions. However, she spontaneously mentioned her recognition of the place where Munni's parents had buried money; she said that as Munni she had been a witness of their doing this. (See items 5 and 12 of Table 8-2.)

Savitri Devi said that she had made a second visit to the family in Shikohabad about a year after the first. She also recalled that Munni's brother, "Nadaria" (presumably Nathu Ram), had visited her in Ahmedpur. There were no

[9]*(continued)* pleasant to be in the place where the baba was, she opted to return to a terrestrial incarnation, perhaps in order to avoid the questioning which staying longer in "that place" would have entailed.

Subjects of cases in India rarely say anything about the period between death and birth. Exceptions include Jasbir Singh, Sunita Khandelwal, Santosh Sukla, Veer Singh, Juggi Lal Agarwal, Gopal Gupta, Puti Patra, Mira Devi Sharma, and Pratima Saxena. The first two of these, like Savitri Devi, said that they were directed toward rebirth by sages or saintly figures (babas).

I have given accounts of "intermission experiences" in other cultures in the reports of the cases of Disna Samarasinghe, Nasir Toksöz, Maung Zaw Thein Lwin, Som Pit Hancharoen, the Ven. Chaokhun Rajsuthajarn, and the Ven. U Sobhana.

Table 8-2 **Summary of Statements and Recognitions Made by Savitri Devi**

Item	*Informants*	*Verification*	*Comments*
1. She had a house in Shikohabad.	Komal Singh, Savitri Devi's paternal uncle	Bhanwar Singh, Munni's father	
2. "Minminia" was there.	Komal Singh	Anar Devi, daughter of Puniya (alias Minminia) and Munni's younger sister	I have put "Minminia" in quotation marks, because it is a nickname, which means "one who speaks through the nose." I am not positive that Savitri Devi said Minminia was her (previous) mother.
3. She was a Dhobi.	Komal Singh	Bhanwar Singh	Savitri Devi by this remark intended to indicate the caste of the previous life. It is not to be understoood that she was saying that she herself was a washerwoman, although the previous personality, a child when she died, may have helped her parents in their work.
4. She had a brother called Nadaria.	Komal Singh Sham Singh, Savitri Devi's father	Nathu Ram, Munni's younger brother	Nathu Ram's familiar names were "Nathi" and "Nathua." The family had no member called Nadaria, and I think that this name was probably Savitri Devi's mispronunciation of "Nathua." It is also possible that Komal Singh misremembered the name that Savitri Devi had correctly stated when she was young. Nathu Ram said that he was born *after* Munni's death, but his father referred to an episode in which he figured and which, he said, Savitri Devi had remembered. I think

			that Nathu Ram was probaly an infant when Munni died.
5. Silver rupees were buried near the drain of the house [in Shikohabad].	Komal Singh	Nathu Ram Suraj Singh, neighbor of Munni's family	When we tried to confirm the correctness of the item of buried money with Bhanwar Singh, he did not speak to this item, but instead narrated another episode of hidden money that he said Savitri Devi remembered (see item 14). I should have brought Bhanwar Singh back to the original question, but did not do so. However, I believe the other two informants adequately verified the item. (See also item 12.)
6. Her thumb had been crushed by an iron weight.	Komal Singh	Bhanwar Singh	The injury had left a permanent discoloration of the thumbnail, but was not related in any way to Munni's death.
7. She died after being given red water from the well.	Komal Singh Sham Singh	Unverified; probably incorrect	Savitri Devi made this remark when Komal Singh asked her, with regard to the previous life: "How did you die?" Sham Singh remembered that Savitri Devi had said: "I died *because* I was given red water" (my italics). See text for full discussion of this item.
8. Recognition of Munni's mother, Minminia	Komal Singh Bhanwar Singh		Komal Singh said that Savitri Devi recognized Munni's mother (Minminia) by running to her and embracing her. She seems to have done this spontaneously and to have picked

Table 8-2 *(continued)*

Item	*Informants*	*Verification*	*Comments*
			out Munni's mother from among several women present. Komal Singh said that Savitri Devi did not give Minminia's name, but Bhanwar Singh said she called her "Amma," which means mother.
9. Recognition of Bhanwar Singh	Bhanwar Singh		Komal Singh said that Savitri Devi had not recognized Bhanwar Singh, but Bhanwar Singh himself said that she had and that she had called him"Pitaji," which means "respected father." Our informant Munni (the younger sister of the first Munni) said that Savitri Devi had recognized Bhanwar Singh, but had addressed him as "Dada," the name by which, she said, her father was known to the family's children. I did not achieve an understanding of this discrepancy beyond supposing that Munni (the previous personality) may have used both words in addressing Bhanwar Singh, and so may Savitri Devi. The word *dada* means paternal grandfather, but it could be used in referring to or addressing other older persons, especially by young children who heard other persons calling the person in question by this word. Although Munni our informant spoke as if

			she had been an eyewitness of this recognition, I have not listed her as one, because she must have been extremely young when Savitri Devi went to Shikohabad and perhaps was only a secondhand witness for the item.
10.	The house where she had lived had two windows and a neem tree.	Bhanwar Singh	Bhanwar Singh	Savitri Devi made this statement at the time of her first visit to Shikohabad. She was then *inside* the family's new house. However, the old house, to which she pointed after going outside the house (see next item) was within view, and she might conceivably have seen it on her way to the new house.
11.	Recognition of house in Shikohabad	Suraj Singh		When Komal Singh first traced Minminia's family, she was living in a house different from the one the family had occupied during Munni's lifetime. However, the previous house was nearby, and Savitri Devi said: "This is not our house. It is there." As she said this, she pointed toward the previous house.
12.	Recognition of place near house in Shikohabad where money had been hidden	Komal Singh Suraj Singh Nathu Ram		See item 5. Komal Singh told us that Bhanwar Singh had confirmed to him that money had been buried in the place shown by Savitri Devi; the money had since been removed. I failed to confirm this item with Bhanwar Singh.

Table 8-2 *(continued)*

Item	*Informants*	*Verification*	*Comments*
13. Recognition of Suraj Singh	Suraj Singh		This recognition occurred during Savitri Devi's first visit to Shikohabad. Someone in the crowd pointed to Suraj Singh and said: "Do you know him?" Savitri Devi said: "He is Suraj Mama." *Mama* is the Hindi word for a maternal uncle. It can be applied appropriately to an older close friend of the family who is not necessarily related.
14. Forty rupees had been kept in a cloth belt; the money had been removed by Nathu Lal [sic] and Asharfi, and they were beaten for this.	Bhanwar Singh	Bhanwar Singh	Nathu *Lal* appears to have been a slip by Bhanwar Singh (or perhaps by my interpreter) for Nathu *Ram*, the correct name of Munni's younger brother. Asharfi was Munni's older sister.

further contacts between the families. Munni's family had asked to be invited to Savitri Devi's wedding, but they were not invited because of the caste differences.

Savitri Devi remembered having, as a child, some nostalgia for Munni's home and a wish to go there; but this feeling had left her, and in 1971 she thought that it would be inappropriate for her to return to visit the previous family.

Savitri Devi was not aware of any connection whatever between Munni's family in Shikohabad and her own in Ahmedpur, and she had no explanation to offer for her birth in a Brahmin family of Ahmedpur.

Savitri Devi's Behavior Related to the Previous Life

I learned nothing about special circumstances of Savitri Devi's references to the previous life. She made few statements and repeated these on different occasions; but she does not seem to have been as forthcoming with information about the previous life as have many other subjects. Sham Singh said that she had stopped talking about the previous life when she was about 6.

Unlike many other subjects of these cases, Savitri Devi did not have a strong desire to visit the previous family. On the other hand, she was not reluctant to visit them either; and when she saw Munni's mother (Minminia), she ran to her and embraced her. Bhanwar Singh recalled that Savitri Devi and Munni's mother wept on meeting each other. Nathu Ram (Munni's brother) said that Savitri Devi was reluctant to leave Munni's family and return to Ahmedpur at the end of her day-long visit in Shikohabad.

So far as her uncle Komal Singh remembered, Savitri Devi did not exhibit any habits typical of a low-caste person. In this respect her case contrasts with that of some other children of high-caste families in India who have remembered previous lives in low-caste ones and have shown habits appropriate for persons of such lower castes. (Swaran Lata provides an example of such a child, and I have studied others of which I have not yet published reports.)

The Behavior of the Adults Concerned in the Case

Savitri Devi's family had enough curiosity about her statements to verify them. As I have explained, she herself showed no strong desire to visit the previous family, and Komal Singh's attempt to verify her statements did not arise from the importunities of the subject as have verifications in many other cases. Sham Singh said that Savitri Devi's family had tried to suppress her memories by turning her on a potter's wheel, a procedure often adopted as a means of suppressing memories of previous lives in India. However, Komal Singh said they had not actually turned Savitri Devi on a potter's wheel. Perhaps they discussed doing so. I think we can be certain, however, that Savitri Devi's Brahmin family did not wish to encourage friendship with a family of Dhobis. To have done so would have imperilled Savitri Devi's prospects for marriage, and, as we have seen, Munni's family were not invited to Savitri Devi's wedding, even though they had asked to be.

Savitri Devi's Birthmark

Figure 8-2 shows the dark pigmentation of Savitri Devi's left thumbnail in 1971. In the color photograph it appeared as a bluish-black discoloration. There was no other defect of the thumb or nail.

In 1971 Phulan Devi remembered that Savitri Devi had a "black" fingernail at birth, but she could not recall which nail had been affected; nor could her husband, Sham Singh. Komal Singh thought the affected nail, which he said had been that of a thumb, had not been "noticed" until Savitri Devi was 5 years old. He may have meant by this remark, not that the abnormal thumbnail was not *observed* until Savitri Devi was 5, but that they had paid no attention to it until then nor understood its significance. I suggest this because, unlike most other subjects of these cases, Savitri Devi did not speak about a previous life until she was about 5 years old. Komal Singh assured us that Savitri Devi had not injured her thumb after she was born.

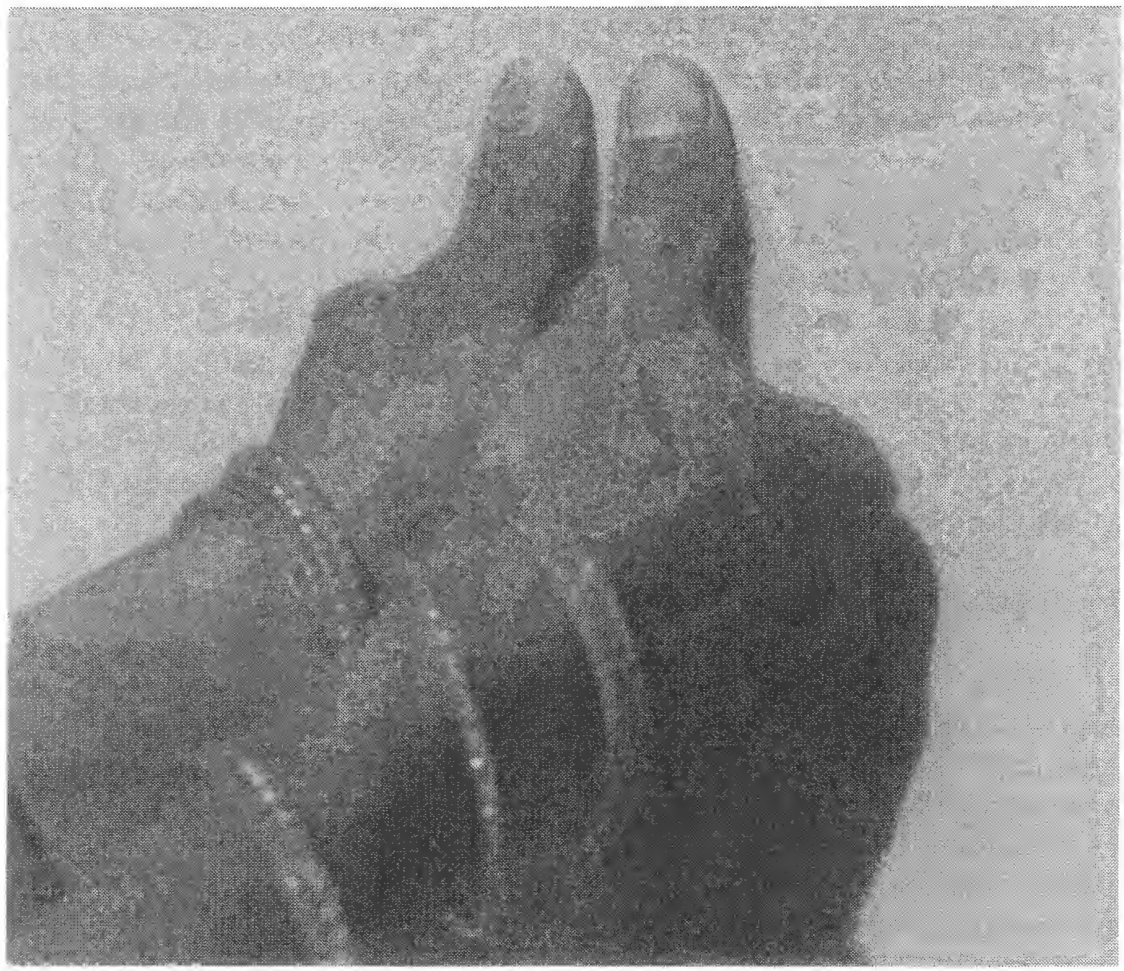

Figure 8-2 Photograph showing dark pigmentation of Savitri Devi's left thumbnail as it appeared in 1974, when she was 27 years old. There was no other defect of the left thumb, and the right thumb was normal. The left thumbnail appears to be slightly smaller than the right one.

Savitri Devi said the discoloration had been present from her birth and had not changed in the intervening years (she was then 24 years old). She had never had any pain in the thumb or any difficulty in using it.

Comments on the Evidence of Paranormal Processes in the Case

The initiative for verification of the subject's statements came entirely from the subject's family. As Brahmins they had nothing to gain by inventing or exaggerating a previous life in a low-caste family for one of their children. Moreover, the geographical separation and socioeconomic gap between the families make it extremely unlikely that Savitri Devi or any member of her family could have fortuitously learned by normal means the correct details about Munni's family that Savitri Devi stated.

Although smashed thumbs are common enough, fingernails discolored at birth are rare. I have found only one similar case, that of Maung Thein. The main informants for the present case all regarded Savitri Devi's birthmark as unusually distinctive. Suraj Singh, who had been a witness of her first visit to Shikohabad, quoted Munni's parents as saying (presumably before they examined Savitri Devi): "If she has a mark on the left thumb, then she is our child."

Savitri Devi's Statement about Munni's Death. In Table 8-2 I have categorized item 7—Savitri Devi's statement about the cause of Munni's death—as "Unverified; probably incorrect." I think it is worth lingering briefly over possible explanations for Savitri Devi's probable error.

When I first went to India in the early 1960s, I read with astonishment reports in the newspapers of thousands of persons dying each week in epidemics of infectious diseases such as cholera, typhoid, and other forms of gastroenteritis. The epidemics, which have since been largely controlled, were particularly likely to occur during the monsoon season when the level of underground water rose and the well water often became contaminated with sewage. In an effort to make the drinking water safe, the villagers would sometimes put a bactericidal agent in the well water. If they used potassium permanganate, the well water would become pink or faintly red. It could thus happen that during an epidemic someone who was already ill and dehydrated might be given some reddish water from a well before he or she succumbed. The difficulty with this explanation for the present case is that Munni did not, according to the memories of her father and older sister later, have during her fatal illness any vomiting or diarrhea, such as would occur nearly always with cholera and most other gastrointestinal infections.[10]

[10]The short duration of the illness does not tell against cholera; on the contrary, it tends to support this diagnosis. Cholera "may run so rapid a course that a man in good health at day break may be dead and buried at night fall" (Bhattacharji, Choudhury, and Bose, 1964, p. 751). In a variant known as *cholera sicca* death may occur in a few hours, without diarrhea (Osler, 1912, p. 136).

I studied a case in India in which the previous personality had been entirely well—at least he was asymptomatic—one day and was dead from cholera the next, within less than 24 hours. The characteristic violent diarrhea and vomiting of this disease rapidly dehydrate the body unless the lost fluid and electrolytes are quickly replaced.

Moreover, Munni's father told us (in 1975) that, although in their neighborhood they had sometimes added potassium permanganate to the well water, they had not done this at the time of Munni's death. In fact, he said it had not been done for 1½ years before her death. Komal Singh said that he had verified at the time of Savitri Devi's first visit to Shikohabad that there had been a cholera epidemic in the area at the time of Munni's death and that she had drunk pink water from a well. However, Komal Singh did not say who had verified this detail for him, and it might have been an obliging, but uninformed member of the crowd who surrounded Savitri Devi.

There is, however, another possible explanation for Savitri Devi's statement. Suppose someone—it need not have been Ram Swaroop, who said he was away at the time—had given Munni some red medicine, perhaps the memory of this became fused with a memory of having drunk pink water from a well on an earlier occasion, as Bhanwar Singh acknowledged could have happened. In Savitri Devi's mind later, an event occurring just before death might have become treated as an explanation for the death. Details of events occurring immediately before death in the previous life frequently figure among the subjects' memories; in fact it is exceptional for the subject not to say *something* about the circumstances of the previous personality's death. Often the details remembered are remarkably accurate; but sometimes they are not, and I have studied several cases in which the subjects have confused events that happened just before death with the cause of the death. Examples of this occurred in the cases of Warnasiri Adikari and Sunil Dutt Saxena.

THE CASE OF MA CHIT CHIT THAN

Introduction

This case, although meager in details, illustrates as well as any other one I know the apparent importance of mental images experienced during the last moments before death.

Summary of the Case and Its Investigation

Ma Chit Chit Than was born in Mandalay, Burma, on June 21, 1971. She was the sixth of seven children born to her parents, U Chit Maung and Daw Than. Three brothers and two sisters were older than she, and she had one younger brother. U Chit Maung was a chauffeur living in exceedingly poor economic circumstances.

Before Ma Chit Chit Than's birth her mother had a dream that prepared her to expect the rebirth of one of her daughters, Ma Khin San Tin, who had died about a year earlier. When Ma Chit Chit Than was born, her parents noted that she had a red birthmark (Figure 8-3) on the upper eyelid of her right eye and the surrounding area of her forehead above the right eye. This birthmark, for reasons that I shall explain, confirmed her mother's expectation that she was Ma Khin San Tin

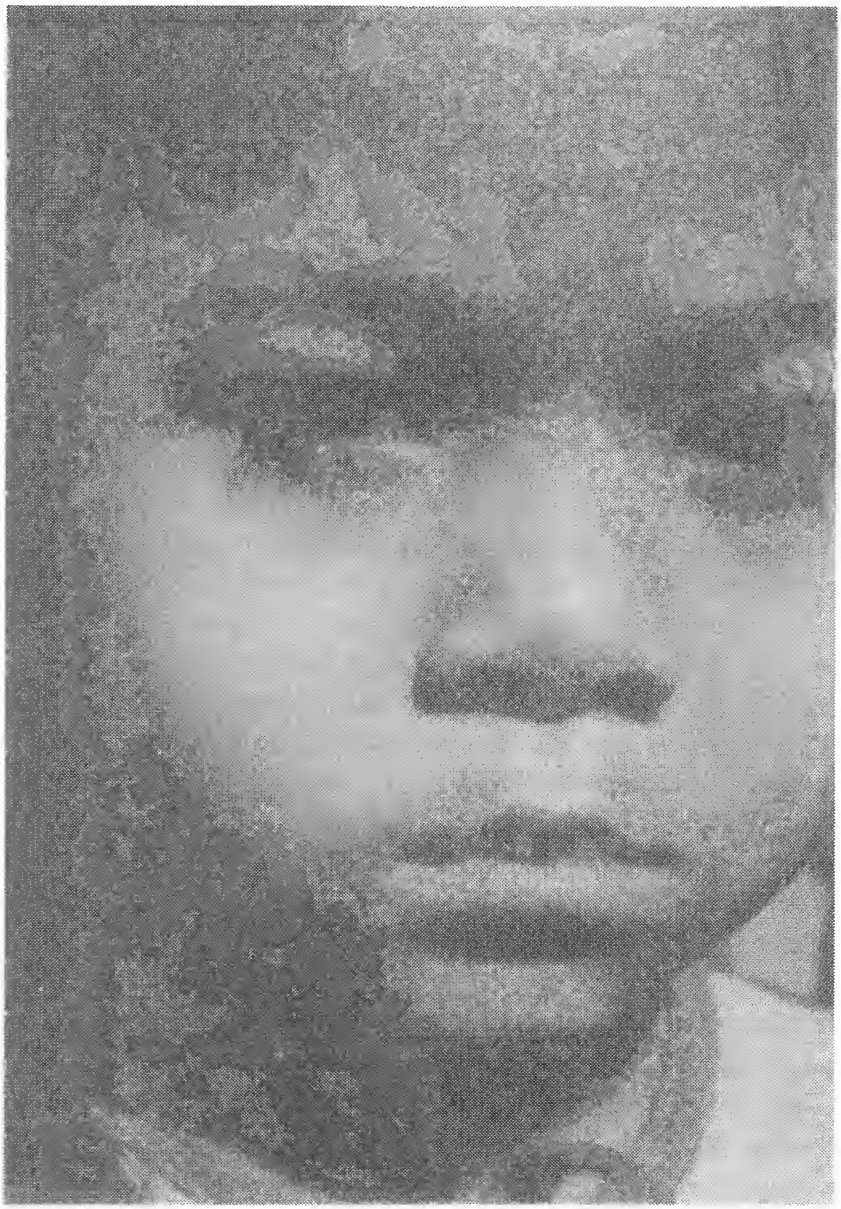

Figure 8-3 This photograph was taken in March 1977, when Ma Chit Chit Than was about 5½ years old. The birthmark was an area of erythema covering the right upper eyelid and forehead above the eye.

reborn. Subsequently, when Ma Chit Chit Than was a little more than 2 years old, she made a few remarks indicating that she had memories of Ma Khin San Tin's life. However, her parents discouraged her from talking about the previous life, and she stopped doing so.

U Win Maung first learned of this case (on April 20, 1976) from an informant in Mandalay who was related to persons concerned in another case that we had been studying. U Win Maung recorded statements from Ma Chit Chit Than's parents and photographed her birthmark. In the following year, on March 2,

1977, he and I were in Mandalay together, and we had further interviews with Ma Chit Chit Than and her parents.

On February 12, 1984, U Win Maung and I again met Ma Chit Chit Than and her family in Mandalay. In addition to learning about Ma Chit Chit Than's later development, we were able to clarify some details about which we remained uncertain from our earlier interviews.

The Life and Death of Ma Khin San Tin

Ma Khin San Tin was the fifth child and second daughter of U Chit Maung and Daw Than. She was born in 1966 in Onkyaw village, which is about 11 kilometers east of Mandalay. During her life she and her family lived in Onkyaw. When Ma Khin San Tin was about 4 years old, in the summer of 1970,[11] she developed an illness described by her mother as "constricted breathing and severe cough." At that time she was still nursing at the breast, as many Burmese children of that age do, but when she fell ill she became unable to take her mother's milk. She then seemed to be so ill that her parents had her admitted to the Mandalay General Hospital. She reacted unfavorably there, and her condition worsened after an injection she was given, so that her parents later thought that she had been given a wrong injection, which had hastened or even caused her death. Ma Khin San Tin died within 3 days of becoming ill, and the rapidity of her downhill course may have increased her parents' suspicions that her case had been wrongly treated.

In many of the hospitals of Asia, family members are allowed to assist in the nursing of patients, and indeed are expected to do so. Daw Than was at the hospital as her daughter's condition deteriorated. The child seemed only semiconscious much of the time. Daw Than went to give Ma Khin San Tin a spoonful of medicine, but she herself was so distraught by her daughter's condition that instead of putting the medicine into the child's mouth she spilled it on her right eye and the surrounding area of the child's face. The medicine was red. Daw Than tried to wipe the medicine off the child's face with her fingers, but much of it remained on the face when (within 5 minutes) Ma Khin San Tin died. Once this had happened, Daw Than decided to leave the remaining red medicine on her daughter's face with the thought that it might generate a birthmark on a later-born child whom she could thereby recognize as the reincarnation of Ma Khin San Tin.[12] So Ma Khin

[11]U Chit Maung and Daw Than gave us different dates at different times for the birth and death of Ma Khin San Tin. The birth year (1965) of another daughter, Ma Than Than Chit, who was older than Ma Khin San Tin seemed reasonably established and provided some guidance. It was agreed that Ma Khin San Tin was 4 years old when she died. We therefore decided that her birth year was 1966, and that she had died in 1970.

[12]This action made the case one of an experimental birthmark. I have already described one case of this group—that of Ma Khin Sandi—and include reports of many other examples in Chapter 10.

The present case also has parallels in those of Sunita Singh, Narong Yensiri, Ma Shwe Yee, Navalkishore Yadav, and Ariya Noikerd in which birthmarks were reported to correspond to blood left on the body of the previous personality before burial or cremation.

San Tin was buried with some of the red medicine still adhering to her face on and around her right eye.

An Announcing Dream

When Daw Than was about 1 month pregnant with Ma Chit Chit Than, she dreamed that an aged couple—an old man and an old woman—who were dressed in ordinary clothes came to her accompanied by a child. Daw Than recognized the child as Ma Khin San Tin, who was dressed in the clothes in which she had been buried. The couple told her: "Look, we have been minding your child for a long time now. Your child also wants to go back to her mother." After saying this, they turned the child over to Daw Than, and the child ran to Daw Than.

According to Daw Than (speaking with U Win Maung in 1976), she woke up and told her dream to her husband. She further said that U Chit Maung had had a similar dream at the same time. U Win Maung did not ask U Chit Maung for his recollections of the dream, and when he and I did ask him the following year (in March 1977), he said that he had completely forgotten about it. (He did not deny that he might have had such a dream.)

Statements Made by Ma Chit Chit Than

Ma Chit Chit Than was just over 2 years old when she began to talk about the previous life. She asked for family photographs, and when she saw one of Ma Khin San Tin, she recognized it and said: "Ma Khin San." She said the photograph was of her and that she was Ma Khin San. (She did not give the entire name.) She asked to have "her" longyis, slippers, and toys. When these were shown to her mixed with some other clothes, she correctly picked out the ones that had been Ma Khin San Tin's.

Ma Chit Chit Than also described the illness and death of Ma Khin San Tin. She said that she had had trouble breathing and was unable to take her mother's milk. She recalled that in the hospital her mother had spilled some medicine on her face.

Daw Than was the informant for the statements by Ma Chit Chit Than mentioned above. U Chit Maung did not seem to remember as much about what Ma Chit Chit Than had said concerning the previous life, but (in response to a leading question) he said that he did remember her saying that she was "Ma Khin San." U Chit Maung may have remembered more about Ma Chit Chit Than's statements than he acknowledged. Although polite, he seemed to be a reluctant witness. I believe that like many informants for these cases, he regarded that of his daughter as straightforward and, from his perspective as a Burmese Buddhist, routine. Thus he saw no need for the questions about details that U Win Maung and I were asking him.

U Win Maung (in 1977) engaged Ma Chit Chit Than in a conversation and asked her whether she still remembered medicine being spilled on her in the previous life. Ma Chit Chit Than replied that she did still remember this incident, and

she added the detail that it had been her mother who had spilled the medicine on her. U Win Maung observed that recalling the incident troubled Ma Chit Chit Than, and she became slightly tearful as she talked about it.

Ma Chit Chit Than's Birthmark

Ma Chit Chit Than's birthmark (Figure 8-3) was a nevus flammeus (popularly known as a port-wine stain).[13] In 1977 Daw Than said that the birthmark was the same color as it had been when Ma Chit Chit Than was born. It had not faded in the intensity of its coloration, nor had it changed in size relative to other surrounding anatomical features as Ma Chit Chit Than had grown.

Daw Than said that the birthmark on Ma Chit Chit Than's eye and forehead corresponded to the place where she had spilled the medicine.

U Chit Maung recalled that Ma Khin San Tin had been buried with a "stain" on the right side of her face in the area of her eye and forehead. He thus confirmed his wife's statement about the correspondence between the location of Ma Chit Chit Than's birthmark and the place on Ma Khin San Tin's right eye and forehead where she had spilled the red medicine.

No other member of the family had had a similar nevus.

Ma Chit Chit Than's Health

Daw Than said that Ma Chit Chit Than had some tendency to difficulty in breathing with wheezing respiration and cough. These were the symptoms that characterized Ma Khin San Tin's last illness. No other child of the family and none of the parents and grandparents or other relatives of the family were known to have had respiratory symptoms, such as those of Ma Khin San Tin and Ma Chit Chit Than.

Ma Chit Chit Than's Later Development

In February 1984, Ma Chit Chit Than was about 12½ years old. She was then in the fifth grade of school, where she was among the top students. She was still suffering from attacks of cough and shortness of breath, which I assume were episodes of bronchial asthma. She also complained of stomach pains, at which times her abdomen seemed to become bloated.

[13]The reddish coloration of such nevi results from the dilatation of small blood vessels of the skin. In the report of Yvonne Ehrlich's case (Chapter 5) I discussed nevi flammei of the nape of the neck, which is the commonest site for them. Here I need to add that the second most common location for these lesions is the upper eyelid and lower forehead around the orbit (Bossard, 1918; Pratt, 1953). Although this is the location of the birthmark on Ma Chit Chit Than, the following observation by Bossard (1918) deserves emphasis. He found that these lesions on the faces of newborn infants faded to such an extent as the child grew older that most had disappeared at the end of the child's second year, and few remained into later childhood or adulthood. In fact, he found among 1,000 older children and adults none with a lesion of the face that he regarded as cosmetically disfiguring.

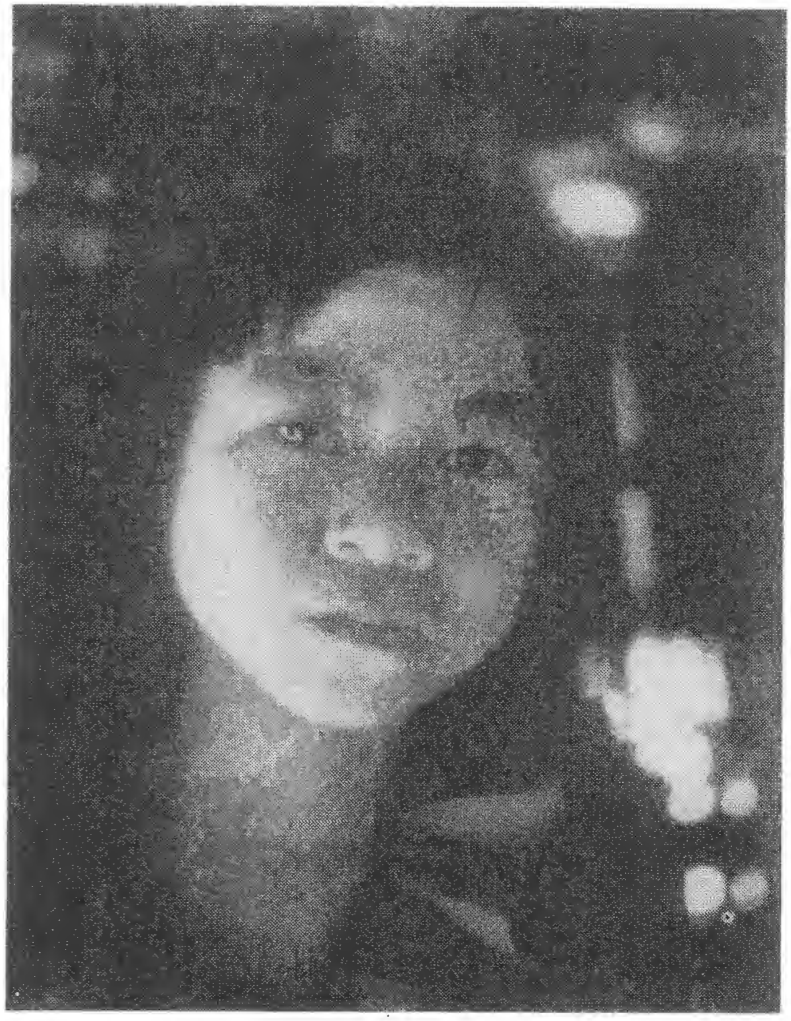

Figure 8-4 This photograph was taken in February 1984, when Ma Chit Chit Than was about 12½ years old. The birthmark was still markedly red and more prominent than it had been in 1977.

Ma Chit Chit Than's birthmark around her right eye had not faded since 1977, as Figure 8-4 shows. If anything, the birthmark was slightly more prominent than it had been earlier. Pressure with a finger on the birthmark made it only slightly paler than it had been without pressure; it remained definitely red.

THE CASE OF JOHN ROSE

John Rose was born in Angoon, Alaska, on October 5, 1963. His parents were George Rose and his wife, Amy. At the time of John's birth, his parents had already had six other children, of whom four were still living. They were Tlingits, and George Rose, like most of the men of Angoon, was a fisherman.

Before John's birth someone in the family had a dream that a deceased member of the family, William Paul, was returning to them as the new baby. The

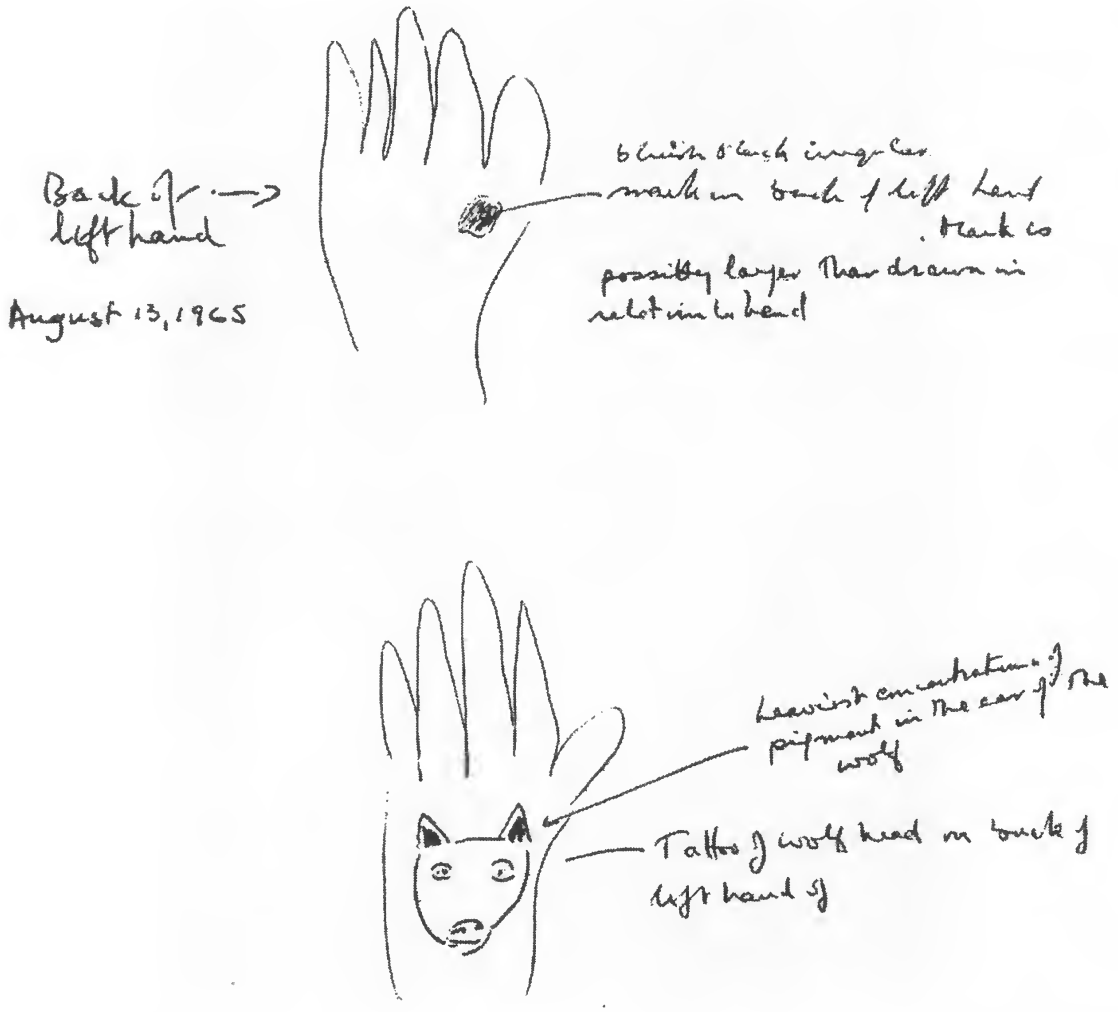
Back of left hand
August 13, 1965
bluish black irregular mark on back of left hand. Mark is possibly larger than drawn in relation to hand
Tattoo of wolf head on back of left hand of

Figure 8-5 The upper of the two sketches shown indicates the site and approximate size of the birthmark on the back of the left hand of John Rose, as it appeared in August 1965, when he was approximately 22 months old.
The lower sketch was made from the tattoo of a wolf's head on the back of the left hand of Susan Paul Kedake. She was a sister of William Paul, who was said to have had a similar tattoo of a wolf's head on the back of his left hand. This sketch was also made in August 1965.

dream included the typical feature of Tlingit announcing dreams in that William Paul "arrived with a suitcase" (Stevenson, 1966). My informants could not later remember who had had this dream, but it was sufficiently clear so that the boy was given the Tlingit name that William Paul had had. William Paul had died in Klawock (of heart disease) on May 26, 1951, at the age of (approximately) 69. He was the brother of Amy Rose's maternal grandmother.[14]

[14]William Paul's reincarnation in the line of his sister would accord with the Tlingit matrilineal society. In a series of 43 Tlingit cases subject and previous personality were related on the side of the subject's mother in 30 (70%) (Stevenson, 1966).

At John's birth, or soon after, he was found to have a large mark on the medial aspect of his left hand (Figure 8-5). This was said to correspond to part of a tattoo of a wolf's head that William Paul had had on the back of his left hand.

I learned about this case during a visit to Angoon in August 1965. At that time I was able to examine John's left hand and also his mother's. I interviewed both of John's parents, his mother's uncle (Frank Kedake), and his mother's maternal grandmother (Susan Paul Kedake).

George Rose and his wife, Amy, were far from being the most cooperative of all my informants, and they seemed to yield information reluctantly. I think this attitude derived from their bafflement over the purport of my questions. In contrast, Frank Kedake proved both knowledgeable about the case and forthcoming. His mother (Susan Paul Kedake), an elderly lady of 76 in 1975, spoke Tlingit and no English; and her son translated my questions for her and her answers.

In August 1965, John Rose was still an infant of only about 22 months. Figure 8-5 shows a sketch I made of his left hand that indicates the birthmark on the back of his left hand. My notes describe it as "about ½ to 1 inch wide and long, rather bluish-black in color, not raised, irregular in shape."

Amy Rose, her maternal grandmother, and her maternal great-uncle (William Paul) were all members of the Wolf clan of the Eagle moiety. William Paul and his sister Susan Paul Kedake both had tattoos of a wolf's head on the backs of their left hands. Frank Kedake explained to me that his mother was a high-ranking person (a tribal princess) and she had been tattooed in a ceremony 50 years earlier. The tattoo on her hand, he said, was the same as that of her brother (William Paul), which was also on the back of his left hand. I made a sketch of the tattoo on Susan Paul Kedake's left hand (lower sketch of Figure 8-5).

I considered whether the bluish-black birthmark on the back of John Rose's left hand might be an example of an inherited pigmented macule. However, George and Amy Rose told me that John was the only member of the family who had such a birthmark. I noticed that Amy Rose had a pigmented macule on the back of her left hand, but it was in the middle of the hand, not at the side like her son's. I did not examine the hands of other members of the family.

Frank Kedake drew my attention to the correspondence between the site of the mark on John Rose's hand and one of the sites of the heaviest pigmentation in the tattoo on his uncle's hand. This was where the tattooer tried to show with heavy pigmentation the shadow of the wolf's ears. The family seems to have thought that if any part of the wolf's head would stimulate a birthmark in another incarnation (while other parts did not), this would be a part with heavier pigmentation than other parts.

I have no later information about this case, and I cannot say whether John Rose ever made statements suggesting that he had imaged memories of his great-great-uncle's life.[15]

[15]Other subjects who had a birthmark corresponding to a tattoo on a deceased person include: Thiang San Kla, Rhonda Mead, Maung Thein, U Po Thwai, and Maung Tin Ngwe.

THE CASE OF LINDA CHIJIOKE

Summary of the Case and Its Investigation

Linda Chijioke was born on September 16, 1981, in Ndeaboh, Anambra State, Nigeria. Her parents were Paul Chijioke and his wife, Maureen. They were Igbos. Linda was the third and youngest of their three children. Paul Chijioke was a schoolteacher.

Almost immediately after Linda's birth she was noticed to have a prominent birthmark of blue-black pigmentation on her scalp (Figure 8-6). Her parents were con-

Figure 8-6 Birthmark on the top of Linda Chijioke's head in June 1984, when she was not quite 3 years old. The birthmark was an area of increased pigmentation and shorter hairs covering about one quarter of the surface area of the superior part of the scalp. Linda's face is at the bottom of the photograph, and the birthmark crosses the midline with its larger part on the left side.

cerned, even alarmed, by the appearance of the birthmark, and thinking it might be due to a disease—an infection of the skin perhaps—they consulted a doctor. He asked them whether they had rubbed something on Linda's head, but they denied this.

At her birth Linda's parents provisionally identified her as the reincarnation of a deceased person and gave her that person's name. (I did not learn on what basis they reached this decision.) However, Linda then began to ail, which made her parents think they had made a mistake in naming her, and they consulted an oracle.[16] He advised them that the birthmark was a residue of having carried heavy loads on the head in a previous life, and he told them that Linda was the reincarnation of her paternal grandmother, Ori Chijioke. Ori Chijioke, who had died in 1967, had been known to have had a lesion at the top of her head where she carried loads on it. Ori's older sister, Uzuma Nweze, said that Linda's birthmark was at the place where Ori's lesion had been.

When Linda became able to speak, she made a few statements indicative of memories of the life of Ori Chijioke. She also, as I shall describe more fully later, strongly objected to carrying any load on her head.

Linda's mother, Maureen, first mentioned the case to Nicholas Ibekwe in March 1984, and he immediately made a preliminary investigation of it. On June 15-16, 1984, I extended the investigation of the case. (Dr. Nicholas McClean-Rice accompanied me.) We interviewed (in Ndeaboh) Linda's mother, Maureen Chijioke, and her maternal grandmother, Maria Kama. No other qualified informants were available on those days.

Subsequently, Nicholas Ibekwe, at my request, had a further interview (in September 1984) with Maureen Chijioke and Maria Kama. I asked him to inquire further about Linda's reluctance to carry loads on her head about which I thought that we had learned insufficient details. Nicholas Ibekwe also talked with Linda herself about her objections to carrying loads on her head.

In June 1985, Nicholas Ibekwe obtained some further information about the case from Linda's parents and from Ori Chijioke's older sister, Uzuma Nweze.

The Life and Death of Ori Chijioke

Ori Chijioke was born in about 1902 in Mgbowo, a town about 16 kilometers from Ndeaboh. Her father was a peasant farmer. She had little or no education and was illiterate. When she grew up, she married a farmer and trader called Chijioke Ezeudu. Ori had several children, of whom Paul Chijioke, Linda's father, was one. She assisted her husband in his trading. There was nothing unusual in that, since rural women in Nigeria are expected to work with their husbands.

[16]I have given elsewhere further information about the naming of children among the Igbo in relation to the identification of the person thought to be reborn (Stevenson, 1985).

Peoples of some other cultures, such as the Eskimos and Thais, believe that misnaming a child through misidentification of the correct previous personality may lead to illness. The case of Hair Kam Kanya provides another example of this.

However, Ori's husband engaged in long-distance trading; thus whereas the average Nigerian peasant woman has to carry loads of water between a stream (or well) and her house or carry loads of produce between the nearest market and her house, Ori was obliged (for her husband's trading) to walk many miles with loads on her head. In addition to traveling long distances on foot, she had to carry unusually heavy loads. In particular, the money that her husband earned in trading went home in the load on Ori's head. In the days of her husband's trading a common type of trading currency was a semicircular piece of heavy metal called an *okpoo*, and a successful trading journey yielded a heavy load of these ingots for the journey home.

Figure 8-7 shows a Nigerian woman carrying a load on her head. The load, usually carried in a container, is held vertical, but the head and neck may be slightly tilted, so that the weight of the load tends to fall more on one side of the head than the other. Sometimes the women place a small pad between the scalp and the load. Some Nigerian women—I do not know how many—develop lesions, usually minor, on the scalp where the load is carried. The hairs of the area affected become shorter and the skin becomes darker; sometimes blisters also occur. (From the information I obtained I infer that at times the affected area will heal over and could then be described as a scar; then, after further abrasion from more carrying, the area may again become inflamed and could be described as a wound.)

According to Maria Kama, Ori Chijioke had the first two of these three signs mentioned at the top of her head: shorter hairs and darker skin where she carried her head loads. Paul Chijioke had been a boy of 13 when his mother died; but he remembered that his mother (Ori) had had a "scar" on the right side of her head. His wife, Maureen, had never met Ori herself and so was not a firsthand witness of the lesion on Ori's head. However, Ori's sister, Uzuma Nweze, was, and she clearly remembered that Ori had a scar on her scalp where she carried loads. She did not specify the location on Ori's head of the lesion, but said that Linda's birthmark was "exactly where Ori had the scar."

According to Maria Kama, who knew Ori, Chijioke and Ori were happily married. Maria Kama had never heard Ori complain of having to bear loads on her head over long distances. Ori's older sister, Uzuma Nweze, corroborated this. She said that Ori had never grumbled openly about carrying loads on her head or quarreled with her husband about the matter. However, she remembered that Ori had told her privately that she did not intend to suffer in this way—meaning from carrying loads on her head—in her next incarnation.

Ori had an average physique and was not noticeably frail. When I asked why some women develop lesions where they carry loads on their heads whereas others do not, I was told that this was a matter of "constitution." The distance over which loads would be carried and the weights of the load would be additional factors in producing lesions on the heads of some women but not on others.

Ori Chijioke died in Ndeaboh in 1967 at the age of approximately 65. Her death was natural, and I did not learn of any specific cause for it.

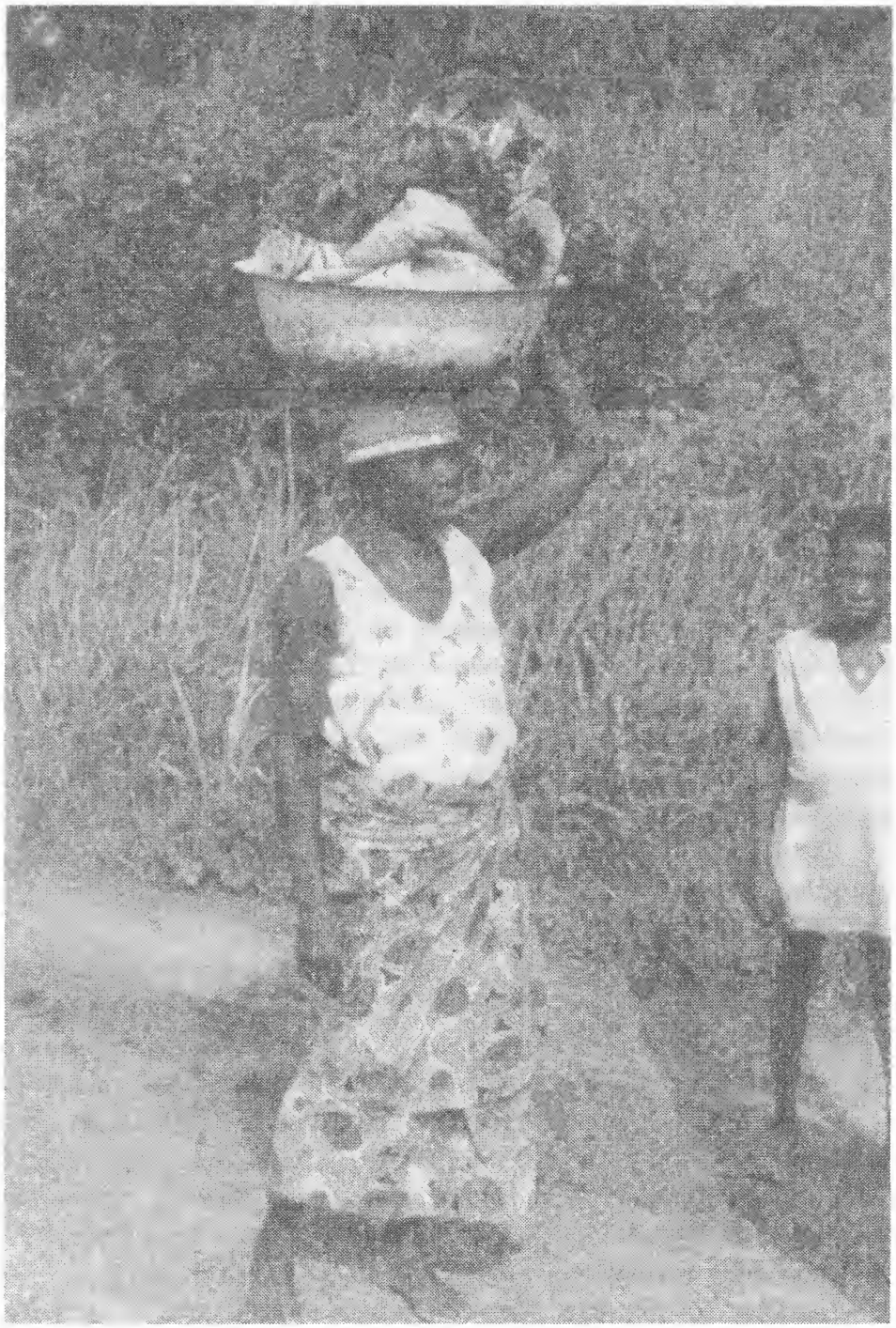

Figure 8-7 Nigerian woman carrying a load on her head. The padding often worn between the head and the vessel with the load can be seen in the photograph.

Statements Made by Linda

Linda made few statements about the previous life. She said that her name was Ori and that she was her father's mother. She asked her family to call her Ori. They did this from time to time and it gave her pleasure; however, they never

changed her name from Linda. She recalled that she could not read and write in the previous life, and said that she wished to be educated in "this one."

When anyone asked Linda why she had a mark on the top of her head, she said that it came from the life of Ori.

Linda's Attitude toward Carrying Loads on Her Head

Young children in Nigeria often play at carrying loads on their heads. For example, they may fill a small can with sand and carry it on their heads in imitation of their mother bringing a vessel filled with water from a stream. Maureen Chijioke observed that when Linda played with other young children who were doing this, she would carry her load in her hand instead of putting it on her head. Maureen Chijioke noticed this behavior as soon as Linda began to play with toys, and I suppose this would be at the age of 2 or 3.

Maureen sometimes urged and even forced Linda to carry something on her head. She might threaten to take away something that Linda particularly liked unless Linda put it on her head. If Maureen did this, Linda would put the object on her head, keep it there somewhat awkwardly for a short time, and remove it as soon as she could. Nicholas Ibekwe put Linda through a similar test when he visited her and her family in September 1984. He could only persuade Linda to carry a light load on her head by threatening to go off with her mother's purse unless she (Linda) carried it on her head to her mother. She did this reluctantly.

Linda's Birthmark

Figure 8-6 shows that the main feature of Linda's birthmark is the much heavier pigmentation in its area compared to that of the surrounding scalp. (In the original color photograph this area appeared with a blue-black coloration.) I believe the hairs of the birthmark are slightly shorter than those elsewhere on the head, and that the figure shows this feature. The birthmark covers about one quarter of the surface area of the superior part of the scalp. It extends on either side of the midline, but more to the left than to the right. (Paul Chijioke remembered his mother's lesion as being on the *right* side of the head; but Uzuma Nweze thought that Linda's birthmark was exactly where Ori's lesion had been.)

Maureen Chijioke said that when Linda was born the area of the birthmark appeared as if "gummed." (I did not question her further about the use of this word; it may have been intended to describe a slight oozing of serum from the birthmark.) After about 6 weeks the birthmark "turned into a dark black scar."

Linda had never complained of headache.

The Igbo Explanation of Linda's Birthmark. The principal established facts of the case are: that Linda claimed to be the reincarnation of her paternal grandmother, Ori, who carried heavy loads on her head over long distances; that Ori had developed a lesion on her head where she bore the loads; and that Linda had a prominent birthmark at the same site, or a nearby one, on her head.

I have already mentioned that a certain number of Nigerian women develop changes in the pigmentation and hairiness of their scalps at the sites where they carry loads on their heads. Because I had not myself encountered another case like Linda's, I thought they were unusual in Igboland, but Nicholas Ibekwe told me that he had observed similar birthmarks even in Azunkwo, which happens to be the village where his father lived. Parents may not observe some birthmarks; they might overlook one on the top of the head that was small. Even so, I think the incidence of birthmarks like Linda's must be far below that of lesions on the head among Nigerian women, nearly all of whom (in the villages) carry loads of some kind on their heads. We should therefore ask why there are (probably) fewer birthmarks than scalp lesions resulting from carrying loads on the head.

I discussed this case with Eddie Etunwoke, of the Alvan Ikoku College in Umuahia. He is an Igbo who is particularly well informed about the traditional religion of his people. For him Linda's case had a straightforward explanation, and he told me that the Igbo even have a phrase for the attitude that we learned Ori had toward carrying loads on her head. (As I mentioned above, Ori did not publicly resent having to carry heavy loads over long distances; but privately she expressed annoyance about this and a resolve not to get into a similar situation in her next life.) The relevant Igbo phrase is *ebibi uwa*, and it is best translated as "rejection of one's lot in life."

The Igbo believe that a discarnate person, before he or she reincarnates, settles on the general plan of his or her next incarnation. The settlement amounts almost to a kind of contract for a certain destiny after being reborn.[17] However, after being born a person may rebel against the terms that prenatally he or she accepted for the incarnation. Eddie Etunwoke reasoned that Ori, despite her public appearance of docile compliance, "rejected the lot" of having to carry heavy loads on her head over long distances. This created a kind of psychic disturbance that led to the occurrence of Linda's birthmark. According to his view, if Ori had not resented having to carry loads on her head, Linda (as Ori reincarnated) would have had no birthmark.

The concept of "rejection of one's lot in life" with an ensuing localized "irritation" capable of producing a birthmark has some similarity to the concept of "attachment," which has such a prominent part in Buddhist psychology. I shall do no more than mention this affinity here, but will return to the subject later.

INTRODUCTION TO CASES WITH BIRTHMARKS CORRESPONDING TO HOLES PIERCED FOR EARRINGS

In the early days of these investigations informants for the cases of Jagdish Chandra and Kumkum Verma told me that when these subjects had been born, they

[17]I have published elsewhere a fuller account of the Igbo belief that discarnate personalities, when they are about to reincarnate, make a sort of contract about the conditions of the new life they are about to begin (Stevenson, 1985).

had birthmarks in their ears that corresponded to holes pierced for earrings in the persons whose lives they remembered. I examined their ears and found no birthmarks; they had faded. In subsequent years I learned of other subjects who had birthmarks in their ears that were still visible. To the present I have been able to study nine such cases: two in India, three in Burma, one in Sri Lanka, and three in tribes of northwest North America. In six of these cases I could examine and photograph the birthmarks myself. In the seventh case the birthmark on one ear had faded and that on the other ear was faintly discernible, so that I sketched but did not photograph it. In the remaining two cases I was unable to examine the subjects, but report the cases briefly along with sketches that I made from informants' descriptions of the birthmarks.

Cases of birthmarks in ears (corresponding to holes pierced for earrings in a deceased person) have been reported for other cultures: the Chippewa (Hilger, 1951), the Arapaho (Hilger, 1952), and the Berawan of Borneo (Metcalf, 1982).

In this section I have added a single case of a birthmark corresponding to the hole for a labret in a Tsimshian of British Columbia.

THE CASE OF PRATIMA SAXENA

Summary of the Case and Its Investigation

Pratima Saxena was born on May 24, 1965, in Bareilly, Uttar Pradesh, India. Her parents were Vinay Krishna and his wife, Shail. Pratima was their only child. They belonged to the Kayasth caste. Vinay was an assistant engineer with the Irrigation Department of the State of Uttar Pradesh.

Shail's pregnancy with Pratima was normal, and she was delivered at full term. As a baby, Pratima would not nurse at her mother's breast and had to be given cow's milk. No special significance was attached to this behavior at the time, but it later became identified as a minor feature of the case. This was true also of bronchopulmonary symptoms from which Pratima suffered from her birth and through her childhood into adulthood.

When Pratima was less than a year old, her paternal grandfather noted two birthmarks at the superior parts of the pinnae of her ears. One of these later faded, but the other remained visible (Figure 8-8). Pratima's mother later told us that she herself had *not* noticed the birthmarks at Pratima's birth or later, until her grandfather drew their attention to them; and Pratima's father had apparently never seen her birthmark until our interviews of 1971, when we pointed it out to him.

Pratima began to speak coherently when she was about 1½ years old and to make references to a previous life when she was between 2 and 3. She said that she was Godavari, her father's mother. (Godavari had died some 20 years before Pratima's birth.) Pratima made a small number of other statements about the previous life and also about experiences she claimed to remember during the years between Godavari's death and her birth. She also made a few recognitions and showed some unusual behavior that accorded with her claim to be Godavari reborn.

Figure 8-8 Birthmark on the pinna of Pratima Saxena's left ear as it appeared in October 1976, when she was 11½ years old. The birthmark was a round hyperpigmented macule about 1.5 millimeters in diameter just inferior to the fold of the helix.

Godavari's husband, Gokul Chandra, was the oldest brother of Jagdish Chandra, whose case I investigated earlier. In the course of studying Jagdish Chandra's case I met Gokul Chandra in Bareilly, and during one of our meetings (in October 1969) he told me about the case of Pratima, who was his granddaughter. Pratima and her parents lived in Lucknow then, and 2 years elapsed before I was able (in November 1971) to meet them. Five years later, I was able to meet them again in October 1976.

In the interviews of 1971 I was assisted by Dr. L. P. Mehrotra, in those of 1976 by Dr. Satwant Pasricha. The informants spoke English fairly well, but Dr. Pasricha interpreted some exchanges in Hindi.

I did not meet Pratima again for 12 years. However, in November 1988 Dr. Pasricha and I again visited her and her parents, with whom she was still living in Lucknow.

Persons Interviewed during the Investigation

In Lucknow I interviewed:

Pratima Saxena
Vinay Saxena, Pratima's father
Shail Saxena, Pratima's mother

In Bareilly I interviewed:

Gokul Chandra,[18] Vinay Saxena's father and Godavari's husband
Jamuna, Gokul Chandra's sister

Although we met and talked a little with Pratima, she was already 6½ years old when we first met her, and she no longer remembered the previous life. Gokul Chandra's sister, Jamuna, was present during part of my interview with him. However, she contributed only one observation, of an episode that had occurred in Bareilly. Thus the main informants for the case were Pratima's parents and her paternal grandfather.

Vinay Saxena was away on his official duties with the Irrigation Department during much of Pratima's early childhood. She and her mother then stayed in Bareilly with Pratima's grandfather. The family moved from Bareilly to Lucknow in 1968.

Pratima's mother appears to have taken little interest in what Pratima was saying and more or less dismissed her statements, at least at first, as just childish prattle. Her father-in-law, on the other hand, was keenly interested in what Pratima was saying and encouraged her to talk more; he would sometimes ask her questions about her memories. He seems to have observed Pratima closely, but we shall have to consider later how far his affection for his deceased wife may have biased his observations of what Pratima did and said about her.

The different opportunities for observation and perhaps the varying attentiveness of the three informants gave rise to some discrepancies in their statements to which I shall draw attention later.

The Life, Death, and Character of Godavari

Godavari was born in about 1915. Her son, Vinay, could not remember exactly where she had been born, but located her birthplace in the Mainpuri District of Uttar Pradesh.

In her teens she married Gokul Chandra and thereafter lived in his large joint family house in Bareilly. She had two children. The first child, a daughter, died in infancy. Then she had a son, Vinay, who was born in 1938. At the time of Vinay's birth, Godavari was already ill with pulmonary tuberculosis. Thereafter, her health gradually declined, and she became a bedridden invalid. She died on April 28, 1945. Vinay was then 7 years old. As Godavari was dying, she called Vinay to her bedside, and he recalled that her last utterance was saying his name, "Vinay." She was about 30 or a little less when she died.

[18]The Saxenas are a subgroup of the Kayasth caste. Some Indians use the name of such a subgroup (for example, Saxena, Srivastava, Bhatnagar) as a family name; but others, particularly of the older generations, have not done this. Gokul Chandra and Jagdish Chandra used only their given names; Gokul's son, Vinay, adopted Saxena as a surname.

Figure 8-9 Woman of Fatehabad, Uttar Pradesh, India, wearing an earring in the upper part of the pinna. This photograph was taken in 1980.

According to Vinay's memory in 1976, his mother died after midnight, at around 2:00 a.m. Her body was cremated at Kachla, by the Ganges River (32 kilometers from Bareilly), the next morning at about 10:00 a.m.[19]

Gokul Chandra said that Godavari had holes in her ears for wearing earrings. The holes were in the upper parts of the pinnae. Figure 8-9 shows a modern Indian woman (of Uttar Pradesh) wearing earrings at this location.

When I first learned of this case, I was engrossed in completing my investigation of the case of Pratima's great-uncle, Jagdish Chandra, and I was slow in

[19]These times were revised from statements Vinay had made earlier in 1971. He had said then that his mother had died at about 10:00 p.m. at night and that her body had been cremated at around noon on the following day. He had evidently considered the matter further between 1971 and 1976 and perhaps had spoken with his father about it (although he did not say this). In 1969 Gokul Chandra said that Godavari's body had been cremated 10-12 hours after her death.

Many years later, in 1988, Vinay said that his mother had died at around 4:00 a.m. and that her body was cremated at about 11:00 a.m.

The point is important, because Pratima grumbled that after Godavari's death her body had been too hastily cremated.

Dr. Mehrotra told me that 12 hours would be a normal time between a death and cremation. Seven or 8 hours—to use Vinay's later memories of the elapsed time—could be considered somewhat short.

appreciating the significance of Pratima's case. During my only interview with Gokul Chandra, I failed to learn details that he might have told me about Godavari's personality; and I did not learn much about her later from Vinay, who had been a boy of 7 when his mother died. (It was not feasible for me to meet Gokul Chandra again later.)

I did learn that Godavari was about average in her interest in religion.

An Announcing Dream

When Pratima was 3 months old, Shail dreamed of a woman who appeared with her face covered. The woman asked: "Where is your child?" and Shail replied: "Over there. Who are you?" The woman then said: "I am your mother-in-law."

Statements and Recognitions Made by Pratima

As I mentioned, Pratima made few statements about the previous life (or our informants later remembered few), and I have listed these and five recognitions with which she was credited in Table 8-3.

Gokul Chandra told me that Pratima had given "a vivid description of how she [as Godavari] had died" (items 5 and 6).

Since both subject and previous personality belonged to the same family, we should attach even less importance than usual to Pratima's recognitions. The first three that I have listed in Table 8-3 (items 8, 9, 10) appear to have been quite spontaneous. Item 11 is of little value because of the possibility of cues given to Pratima by other persons present. However, it showed her knowledge of characteristic behavior of Hindu women toward their husbands. Item 12 is also of little value. Gokul Chandra evidently considered it a recognition of the cook by Pratima as from Godavari's memories of the cook; however, I did not learn whether Pratima might already have had some experiences with this cook or known normally that she had been a better cook than she later became.

Pratima did not recognize Godavari's jewelry when it was shown to her. Vinay had a pet name "Tiplu," and Pratima did not know it.

Pratima's Statements about Events between Godavari's Death and Her Birth. Pratima's reference to having been rushed away to the cremation ground (item 7 of Table 8-3) was a reference to events that happened after Godavari's death. Pratima made a number of other comments about the period between Godavari's death and her birth. (I did not include these in Table 8-3, because, with three possible exceptions, they were not verifiable.)

She said that she "went up" and that whenever Vinay was in any trouble she would "come down." According to Gokul Chandra, Vinay, as a child, would sometimes say that he had communicated with his mother in dreams. On one occasion, Vinay had typhoid fever (he was then 9 years old), and he had a dream that his mother told him to take a certain medicine; he did this and recovered. On another occasion, Vinay had fallen down and injured his chin. He then had a dream of his

Table 8-3 **Summary of Statements and Recognitions Made by Pratima**

Item	*Informants*	*Verification*	*Comments*
1. Her name was Godavari.	Gokul Chandra, Godavari's husband	Gokul Chandra	Shail Saxena said that Pratima had not said that her name (in the previous life) had been Godavari, but I think she meant "in my presence." I have no reason to doubt that Pratima did say this to her grandfather.
2. She was Vinay's mother.	Gokul Chandra Shail Saxena, Pratima's mother Vinay Saxena, Pratima's father	Vinay Saxena	
3. Gokul was her husband.	Shail Saxena	Gokul Chandra	
4. Her mother was her daughter-in-law.	Vinay Saxena	Vinay Saxena	Godavari had died many years before Vinay married Shail, but the designation of the relationship between Godavari and Shail was formally correct.
5. She had a fever before she died.	Shail Saxena Vinay Saxena	Vinay Saxena	Gokul Chandra elicited this and the following item by asking Pratima how (in the previous life) she had died. Pratima then repeated what she had said to Shail, who was thus a firsthand witness of the items. Vinay heard of the item from his father later. In 1976 Vinay said that Pratima had also said that she had a cough in the previous life.

Table 8-3 *(continued)*

Item	*Informants*	*Verification*	*Comments*
6. She passed stools in her bed before she died.	Shail Saxena	Vinay Saxena	See comment for previous item. This item refers to fecal incontinence in a person too weak to get out of bed or to control bowel movements.
7. She was cremated too soon.	Vinay Saxena	Vinay Saxena	Pratima said that after dying (in the previous life) she was "rushed" to cremation and that they (meaning the members of the family) "threw me to the Ganges." Godavari's body was cremated 7 or 8 hours after death, sooner than is customary. The ashes and bones not consumed in a cremation fire are usually thrown into a river.
8. Recognition of a photograph of Vinay Saxena	Shail Saxena		Pratima saw a photograph of Vinay as a child sitting on the lap of Godavari. She did not recognize Godavari, but said of the boy (Vinay) "He is my son."
9. Recognition of Godavari's saris	Shail Saxena		Shail was cleaning out a cupboard and had laid out some saris that had belonged to Godavari. Pratima asked whose they were, and Shail said that they were hers (Shail's). Pratima denied this and insisted that they were "hers."
10. Recognition of some embroidered bed coverings that had belonged to Godavari	Shail Saxena		This item occurred at the time of the preceding one. Pratima, after recognizing these bed coverings, said that they should be spread on her bed.

11. Recognition of Gokul Chandra as Godavari's husband	Jamuna, Gokul Chandra's sister and Pratima's great-aunt	Pratima was asked: "Who is your husband?" Pratima murmured something that was not heard or remembered later, and then went to Gokul and took his hand. Cues from the other persons present, who would almost certainly have looked in Gokul's direction, may have guided Pratima; however, the gesture of taking the hand instead of speaking the name distinctly is typical of orthodox Hindu women, who rarely utter their husband's name.
12. Recognition of a family servant	Gokul Chandra	The family had a female cook who had remained with them in the years after Godavari's death and up to the time of Pratima's remark. She said: "Oh. You have forgotten how to cook food." Gokul Chandra told this item to me with the implication that it amounted at least to an indirect recognition of the cook by Pratima as from the previous life. However, I did not learn what previous experiences Pratima had had with this cook's competence.

mother, who asked about his health. According to Gokul Chandra, Vinay dreamed of his mother in the early morning, between about 3:00 a.m. and 5:00 a.m.[20]

I learned of these two dreams from Gokul Chandra in 1969.

When I asked Vinay (in 1971) whether he remembered having dreamed of his mother when he was a child, he said that he did not. He did, however, remember a dream that he had later, in 1959, when he was about 21 years old. At that time he underwent a small operation in a hospital in Bareilly. On the night following the operation he dreamed of a woman. At first he did not recognize her, but he kept looking at her and eventually recognized her as his mother.

Pratima said that she remembered having helped Vinay (during her period as a discarnate personality), but the informants did not tell me that she had remembered and specifically mentioned any of the three occasions when Vinay had been ill or injured and had dreamed of his mother.

Pratima also spoke about the *shradh*[21] ceremony that had been held a year after Godavari's death. She said that she was grateful for the food and water given in her name, but she complained that too little water had been given. No one could remember any grounds for Pratima's complaint.

Pratima, although she said that after death she "went up," also told Gokul Chandra that she had spent the 20 years between death and birth at Gokul Chandra's home in Bareilly, where Godavari had passed the last 10 or so years of her life.

Gokul Chandra said that Pratima had told him how she had "returned to be reborn," but I failed to ask him what she had said about this.

Pratima's Behavior Related to the Previous Life

Circumstances and Manner of Pratima's Speaking about the Previous Life. Gokul Chandra said that the first word spoken by Pratima was "Vinay." However, both Shail and Vinay denied this. (Perhaps "Vinay" was *one* of the first words Pratima spoke and the first that Gokul Chandra happened to hear.)

Pratima spoke "a lot" about the previous life between the ages of 3 and 4. Her father thought that she began to forget about the previous life when she began school at the age of 3½ to 4, because she said little or nothing after that.

A few of her remarks were stimulated by photographs or objects that she recognized (for example, items 8-10 of Table 8-3); others came in response to questions (for example, items 5 and 6 of Table 8-3).

[20]Hindus believe that dreams in the hours before awakening are more likely to be veridical than those experienced early in the night or during its middle hours.

[21]The shradh ceremony is held on the first anniversary of a person's death. Food and water are given to living persons in the name of the dead one, and the merit of this benefits the soul of the deceased.

Gokul Chandra remembered that on the first anniversary of Godavari's death he had given food and water to some Brahmin married women in the name of his wife.

When Pratima was ill with measles, she talked much about Vinay. I did not learn how old Pratima then was.[22]

Pratima's Attitude toward Other Persons and Her "Adult" Behavior. Pratima showed a particularly strong attachment to her father. She called him Vinay instead of father and was still doing this in 1971, when she was 6½ years old. She wanted to sleep with him, but Vinay did not allow her to do this. She then said that she would sleep on the floor next to his bed, but this too Vinay refused to allow. Pratima cried over this rejection. When she was 5, she once made Vinay put his head on her lap as a mother might do to a suffering child. If Vinay came home late, Pratima would become concerned about him. If she had gone to bed before he returned, she would get up when he did so and assure herself that he was all right.

Yet along with her solicitude she also showed an attitude of parental authority. She was inclined to treat her parents as if they were her juniors. She once told her mother bluntly: "I am your mother-in-law." She even asked her mother to touch her (Pratima's) feet, a sign of respect that junior persons in India show to respected older ones. (This would have been an appropriate gesture for Shail to have made to her mother-in-law; but according to Hindu etiquette Pratima should have touched her mother's feet, not the reverse.) She similarly told Vinay that he was her son. When Vinay's bicycle broke, Pratima rebuked him as if this had been his fault. To her grandfather—I think this was Shail's father, not Gokul Chandra—she once gently said: "Why don't you sit up straight?" In general, her manner and tone of addressing other people were more adultlike than the words she used.

She was also much attached to Gokul Chandra. She sometimes called him "Gokul" and sometimes "Baba."[23] She regarded herself as still married to him and wished to observe the ceremony of *karvachauth*[24] by wearing a sari and fasting.

[22]I think we can assume that Pratima had some fever, perhaps more than a little, when she had measles. Young children frequently become delirious when febrile. The mental changes may have included the upwelling of memories that would ordinarily be less prominent or even inaccessible. In the present case we do not know that Pratima was having memories of Vinay as from the previous life. He was, after all, her father, and a sick child may well be preoccupied with its father.

Other subjects who have particularly spoken about the previous life during illness and fever include Vinita Jha, Sanjeev Sharma, Ma Mu Mu, Maung Yin Maung, and Maung Sein Win.

[23]A proper Hindu woman of Godavari's generation would almost never address her husband by his name, or at any rate not in public. It is doubtful whether Godavari ever called Gokul Chandra by his proper name. Perhaps Pratima did so because she wanted to establish publicly a claim of intimacy with him. In the present context, *Baba* is an honorific implying respect for a man; the word is most often applied to religious figures.

[24]In the annual karvachauth ceremony married women fast and perform a puja (religious ceremony) for the well-being of their husbands. Pratima's wish to participate in this ceremony indicated her conviction of being a married Hindu woman.

As I mentioned, when Pratima was a young child, Vinay was often away from home, and his wife and child lived with his father and other members of the joint household in Bareilly until 1968. Vinay was then able to move Shail and Pratima to Lucknow. Therefore, Pratima's attachment to Gokul could have derived from his being an older, and affectionate, male member of the family who was present while her father was away. However, this situation would not account for Pratima's calling Gokul by his name or for her wanting to observe the karvachauth ceremony in relation to him.

Indian girls of Pratima's generation dressed in short frocks and dresses or would wear a blouse and skirt. Pratima at an extremely young age wished to wear saris. She raided a cupboard where her mother kept her saris and would try to wear them. She spoiled a couple of saris, and her mother beat her in an effort to stop her from trying to wear the saris. Nevertheless, Pratima continued to try to put on one particular sari that had belonged to Godavari. She was doing this even after her mother gave her a sari for herself. Pratima was also possessive about Godavari's saris. When she saw them, she would claim them as her own, and she would not allow her mother to wear one particular one. (I did not learn whether this was the same sari that Pratima herself had particularly wished to wear.) Pratima stopped trying to wear saris when she was between 5 and 6 years old.

After Pratima's family moved to Lucknow in 1968, they continued to visit Vinay's family in Bareilly. During the subsequent years up to about 1972, Pratima was observed to wish especially to be in the room where Gokul and Godavari had slept. Vinay described her strong interest in being in this room as a "craze." Pratima's philia for this particular room in the house in Bareilly was not noticed after 1972.

Other Relevant Behavior of Pratima Possibly Related to the Previous Life. As I mentioned earlier, Pratima would not nurse at her mother's breast and had to be fed with cow's milk. In the light of later developments in the case this might be interpreted as harmonious with Pratima's later expressed attitude of superiority (in social rank) to her mother.[25]

Other Behavior on the Part of Pratima

Pratima was fastidious about food and would not eat any that she did not find appetizing. Shail said that she had only an average interest in religion, but she was more generous to beggars than Shail. She was inclined to be dominant. Because I learned so little about Godavari's personality, I cannot say how far these characteristics corresponded to similar traits in Godavari, which is why I have not related them to the previous life.

Like many other subjects of these cases, Pratima was more mature for her age than other children.

Pratima's Birthmark

Pratima had a prominent mark on the outer aspect of the upper part of her left pinna (Figure 8-8). It was a round area of hyperpigmentation approximately 1.5 millimeters in diameter. I sketched it in 1971 and photographed it in 1976. (In those years there was no corresponding mark on Pratima's right ear.)

[25]I have studied some parallel cases in which a subject who later remembered the life of a person who had had a close relationship with his or her mother had, as a baby, refused to nurse its mother. Another example occurred in the case of Brij Chandra Saran (in which this behavior was predicted in a dream before Brij Chandra Saran's birth).

Gokul Chandra said that Pratima's birthmarks were at the same locations on her ears as the holes in Godavari's ears.

Pratima's Physical Health

From birth on Pratima was noted throughout her early childhood to be susceptible to respiratory infections, which included as symptoms both cough and fever. She was sensitive to cold weather. I did not learn how this sensitivity to cold affected her, but presumably it was associated with increased episodes of bronchitis. For a time Pratima had rickets, and I conjecture that this was due to her having been kept indoors a great deal in order to keep her warm during the winter months. (Northern India can be cold during December, January, and February, and the houses are poorly heated or not heated at all.)

Vinay said that during the first 5 years of Pratima's life x-ray examinations of her chest showed "some chronic type of cough." By this I think he was referring to evidence mentioned in reports of x-ray examinations, which he showed to us, of bilateral enlargement of the hilar lymph nodes. This was noted in reports of 1973 and 1975, which he had kept and which I studied. He also had an x–ray photograph from 1971, and, although I am not a radiologist, I could see a definite enlargement of the hilar shadows.

One of the x–ray reports had noted a primary tuberculous complex, but none of them suggested any active pulmonary tuberculosis or showed other evidence of lung disease, apart from the enlarged hilar shadows.

In later childhood (that is, from the age of about 8½) Pratima's health gradually improved, and she had not been ill since December 1973 up to the time of our meeting with her in October 1976—nearly 3 years.

A genetic component may contribute to susceptibility to respiratory infections, and I inquired about whether Vinay or Shail had shown a liability to bronchitis, such as Pratima had had in early childhood. Vinay had not been susceptible to bronchitis, but as a young girl Shail had been, although she lost this weakness after the age of about 14.

Comments on the Evidence of Paranormal Processes in the Case

This case has the weakness of all same-family cases, which is that we cannot exclude the communication to Pratima by normal means of the information that she showed about Godavari's life and death. This suggestion, however, needs examination in the light of the particular details of the case.

On the one hand, it is unlikely that Godavari would have been talked about much in the family 20 years and more after her death. Nor can we imagine that Shail Saxena would have wished to evoke in her home a reproduction of a rather dominant mother-in-law expecting to be treated with proper respect. On the other hand, Shail's own dream about her mother-in-law may have stimulated members of the family more or less to expect that Pratima would remember Godavari's life and

talk about it when she could speak. This in turn may have aroused Gokul's curiosity and led him to question Pratima in ways that may have influenced her responses.

As for Pratima, one can imagine some advantage to her in asserting authority over her mother (and to a certain extent over her father also) by telling them that she was her father's mother and her mother's mother-in-law. Yet she overdid this by offending her mother and even bringing on a beating for raiding her mother's wardrobe in order to put on one of Godavari's saris.

However, if we think we can explain all of Pratima's few statements about the previous life and her unusual behavior along normal lines, we are left with a need also to explain her susceptibility to bronchial infections and the birthmark in her ear, features corresponding to aspects of Godavari's body.

If reincarnation is the best explanation for the case, it falls into the group in which the previous personality died a natural death but with "unfinished business."[26]

Pratima's Later Development

When we met Pratima in November 1988, she was 23 years old. It had been 12 years since our last meeting with her. In the meantime she had matured into a gracious young lady. She had completed an undergraduate degree and then earned an M.B.A. This left her somewhat overqualified for many positions, and, at the time of our meeting, she was unemployed and considering various opportunities. She had not married and was living with her parents.

Pratima's health was only fair. She was myopic and needed to wear glasses. More importantly, she still suffered from a susceptibility to colds and coughs.

The almost obsessive preoccupation with her father's welfare that she had shown as a young child diminished and had ceased by the time she was about 15 years old.

The birthmark on the pinna of her left ear was as prominent as it had been earlier.

THE CASE OF ARYA BHUSHAN

Arya Bhushan was born in Meerut, Uttar Pradesh, India, on July 11, 1918. His parents were Vishwa Mitra and his wife, Gyan Wati Devi. Vishwa Mitra Bhushan was a lawyer. Arya was the oldest of the family's 10 children.

Within 2 or 3 days of Arya's birth, his mother noticed that he had pits on the helices of his ears. She was later not sure exactly how many of these pits he had,

[26]The commonest subgroup of cases illustrating "unfinished business" are those involving mothers who died young and left infants or small children needing their care. Other examples occurred in the cases of Sukla Gupta, Lalitha Abeyawardena, Shanti Devi, and Swarnlata Mishra.

Sukla Gupta's case includes a feature similar to one of Pratima's. When Sukla was just beginning to speak, the name "Minu" was among the first she uttered. As Mana (the woman whose life Sukla remembered) was dying, her last concern had been with who was going to look after her infant daughter, Minu.

but thought there were probably four. Arya Bhushan's wife later remembered, in 1983, that at the time of their marriage—in 1942, when he was 24—her husband had three or four pits on each ear. The pits did not fully penetrate the ears, so that there were no holes.

Arya Bhushan later recalled his mother saying that when he was born, the skin at the bottom of the pits was so thin that it was translucent.

Arya Bhushan never had any imaged memories of a previous life. He also did not show any unusual behavior that might have derived from a previous life.

As Arya Bhushan grew up and became older, the pits in his ears gradually filled up, so that two or three had ceased to show any depression below the skin, although two pits were still easily seen in the 1980s.

I first became acquainted with Arya Bhushan in the 1970s. He was then a high-ranking civil servant (Commissioner of Railway Safety) in the Government of India. I met him from time to time in India and the United States, but did not learn about his birthmarks until 1983. At that time he sent me an essay, "Birthmarks in Reincarnation Cases," which he had written and in which he had referred to his own birthmarks. Subsequently, in July 1983, Dr. Nicholas McClean-Rice met him in Rochester, New York, and recorded a statement from him about the birthmarks (and the absence of imaged memories and related unusual behavior). Arya Bhushan's wife, Swarnlata, contributed a small amount of relevant information at this time.

In January 1984, Dr. Satwant Pasricha interviewed Arya Bhushan's mother, Gyan Wati, in New Delhi. She was then an elderly lady of 81. She had forgotten some details, such as the exact number of birthmarks Arya had had, but she seemed to remember other details and confirmed that Arya Bhushan had never made any statements about a previous life and never showed any behavior that was unusual in his family and that might have been attributed to residues of behavior in a previous life. After the first information about Arya Bhushan's birthmarks, I did not meet him again until February 1986. At that time I met him once more in New Delhi and examined his ears myself.

Conjectures about a Possible Previous Life for Arya Bhushan

Arya Bhushan's mother conjectured that he might have been a Moslem woman in a previous life. She said this even though he showed no traits of a woman or a Moslem in his behavior, because she knew that in her day Moslem women often wore earrings in the upper parts of their ears. We have already seen, however, that Hindu women also wore earrings in the upper parts of the pinnae, at least up to the time of Godavari, whose life Pratima Saxena remembered. (Godavari was born in about 1915.) This fashion appears to have died out afterward in the cities of India, but persisted in the smaller towns and rural areas, at least up to 1980, as Figure 8-9 shows.

Hindu men also wore earrings in the upper parts of the pinnae. A book of Indian paintings from the British period includes a painting (from about 1845) of

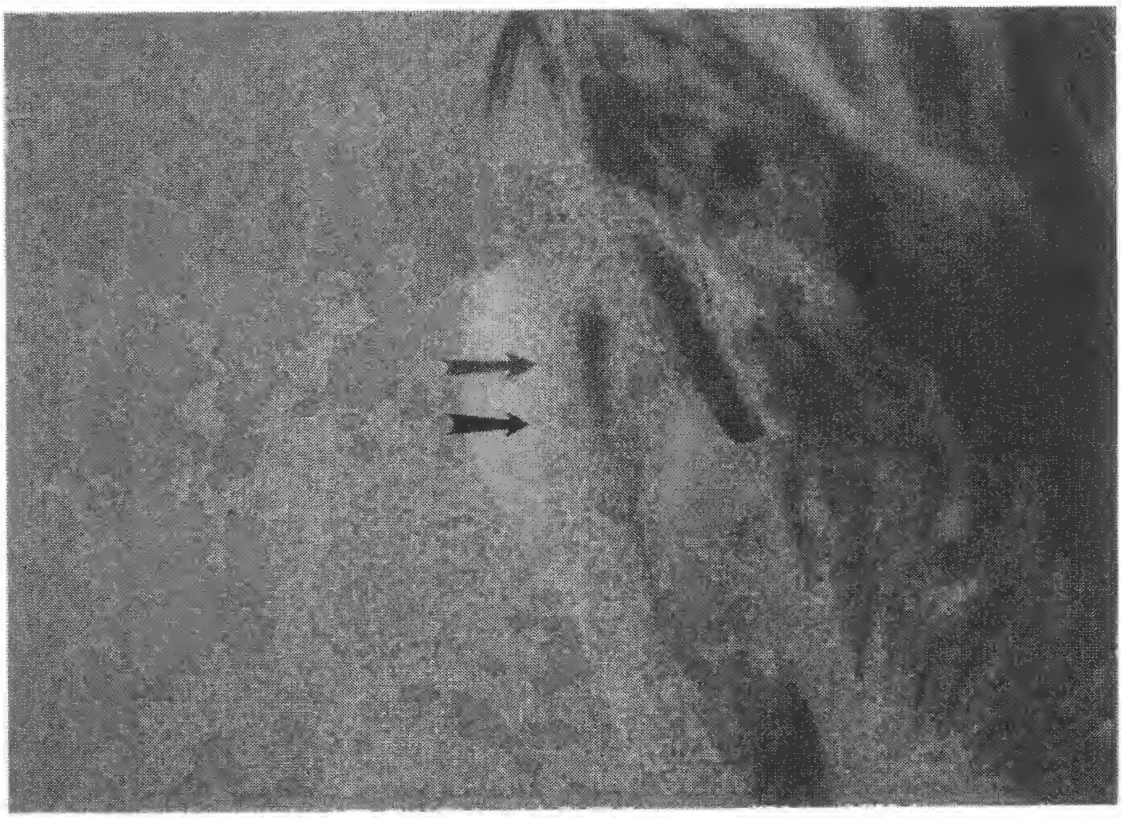

Figure 8-10 Left ear of Arya Bhushan as it appeared in July 1983, when he was 65 years old. The posterior surface of the helix had two circular depressions with slightly increased pigmentation. They were approximately 2 millimeters in diameter.

the last Maratha prince, who can be seen (as can one of his attendants) wearing several earrings in the helix of an ear (Welch, 1978, p. 156). This custom for men also appears to have died out in the cities of India, but persisted in the smaller towns and rural parts of northern India, at least until 1980 (Figure 8-12).

In sum, we can infer nothing about a possible previous life for Arya Bhushan solely from the location of his birthmarks.

Arya Bhushan's Birthmarks

Figure 8-10 shows two birthmarks on the helix of the left ear of Arya Bhushan. Both were depressed below the surrounding skin, the superior one more than the inferior one and they were slightly more pigmented than the surrounding skin. The marks were round and about 2 millimeters in diameter.

Figure 8-11 shows Arya Bhushan's right ear on which a (barely visible) round area of increased pigmentation can be seen. It was not pitted, or only slightly, and was about 1.5 millimeters in diameter. Both these photographs were taken in July 1983, when Arya Bhushan was 65 years old.

Figure 8-11 Right ear of Arya Bhushan as it appeared in July 1983, when he was 65 years old. On this ear one can see, on the posterior surface of the helix, a circular area of increased pigmentation, which was about 1.5 millimeters in diameter.

Figure 8-12 Brahmin farmer of northern India (near Fatehabad, Uttar Pradesh) showing earring worn in the helix of the ear. This photograph was taken in 1980.

THE CASE OF MAUNG NYUNT

Maung Nyunt was born in Magyibin (4 kilometers north of Tatkon) in Upper Burma on December 4, 1940. His parents were U Tin Maung and his wife, Daw Sein U. Maung Nyunt was the second son and second child of four children in his family. When Maung Nyunt grew up, he became a practitioner of indigenous medicine in Burma. Both his parents had died by the time I first met him in November 1975. He was then 35 years old and living in Tatkon. His uncle, U Kyauk Tin, introduced him to U Win Maung and me. We learned about his memories of a previous life and interviewed him about them. We talked with him again, more briefly, in 1984.

Maung Nyunt said that he had been born with birthmarks at the back of the pinna of each ear (Figures 8-13 and 8-14). He said that when he was born the marks were more prominent than they later became.

Figure 8-13 Left ear of Maung Nyunt as it appeared in 1975, when he was about 35 years old. The birthmark was actually a small depression or pit about 2 millimeters long and 1 millimeter wide. It was near the center of the back of the helix.

Statements Made by Maung Nyunt

When U Win Maung and I talked with Maung Nyunt in 1975, he said that his memories of the previous life had faded, but that he still remembered something about it "like a dream." He said that in that life he had been an Indian Hindu and the driver of a pony-cart. He recalled that he had lived in Yamethin (a town about 35 kilometers north of Tatkon) and had had two wives. He thought that he had been about 30 years old when he died. This happened in the following manner. One day when he was driving his pony-cart, it had tipped over, and he fell backwards out of the cart, landed on his head, and died instantly.

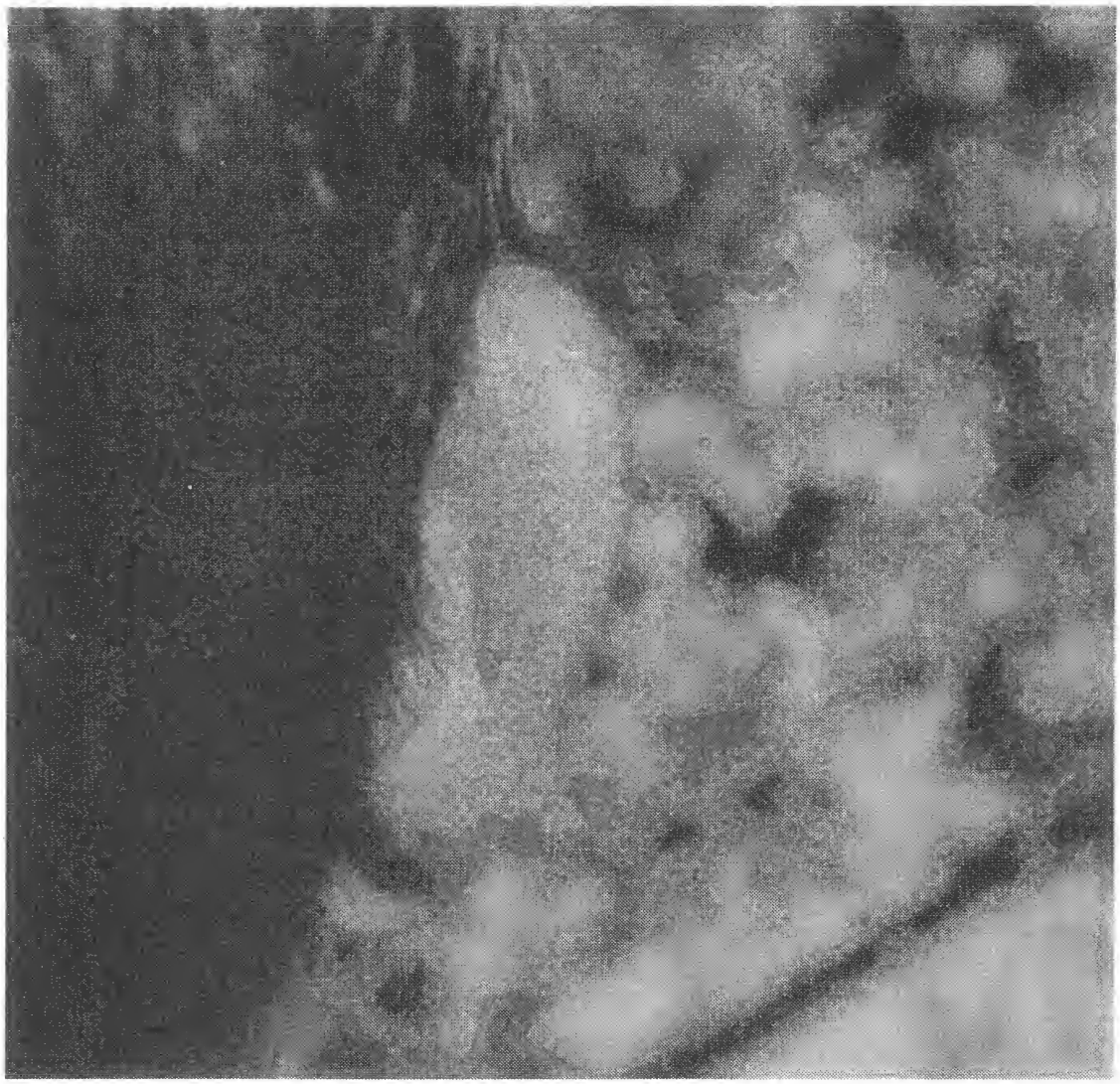

Figure 8-14 Right ear of Maung Nyunt as it appeared in 1975, when he was about 35 years old. The small pit on the pinna of this ear was at the same location as that on the left ear. It was slightly shallower, but otherwise had about the same dimensions as the other birthmark.

Maung Nyunt remembered no experiences in a discarnate state, and he thought that he had been reborn immediately after death in the previous life.

Maung Nyunt's Behavior Related to the Previous Life

Maung Nyunt said that he preferred Indian food to Burmese food even at the age of 35, when we met him. In 1984, when we met him again, he added on this point that he liked milk, but would not eat beef.

Maung Nyunt also said that he had had in general a fear of heights. He would not, for example, climb trees. He also had a strong reluctance to drive a pony-cart. (Pony-carts were then still the chief mode of vehicular transport in small towns in Burma like Tatkon.) He did not object to riding in a pony-cart if someone else drove it. As he grew older, these fears abated, but persisted to some extent even to the time of our meeting him. He said that he could drive a pony-cart if the pony seemed tranquil, but he would not do so if it showed signs of being restless. Maung Nyunt thought that his fear of climbing trees was related to the fall from a pony-cart in the previous life, since climbing trees included a risk of falling down.[27]

Maung Nyunt's uncle, U Kyauk Tin, and his aunt, Daw Ohn Shwe, had known Maung Nyunt since he had been young, but they had not observed the unusual behavior that he reported about himself.

The Plausibility of Maung Nyunt's Statements

If Maung Nyunt had given one or more personal names seemingly remembered from the previous life, we would certainly have tried to verify his statements. Even without personal names, we might have enquired whether his parents had ever known (or heard about) an Indian pony-cart driver who had died in Yamethin in the kind of accident Maung Nyunt described. Unfortunately, as I mentioned, both his parents had died by the time we met Maung Nyunt. In 1975 he had a maternal aunt, Daw Saw Nu, who was still living, and I thought that we might interview her; however, she was ill and said to have "a wandering mind," so it was infeasible to talk with her.

Nevertheless, I can make three remarks about the plausibility of Maung Nyunt's statements. First, in the days before World War II both Moslems and Hindus drove pony-carts in Yamethin. Second, only the Hindus wore earrings, the Moslems never. It was common for the Hindus to have two wives, perhaps one in India and one in Burma. Third, Maung Nyunt's liking for milk and refusal to eat beef are Hindu, not Moslem, characteristics. If the previous personality of this case was an Indian, then he was almost certainly a Hindu, as Maung Nyunt himself believed.

[27]Maung Nyunt's fear of falling from trees provides another example of the generalization of a phobia beyond the situation in the previous life—in his case, falling from a pony-cart—that the subject said stimulated the phobia.

I give other examples of this feature in the report of the case of Daw Aye Myint.

There seems little possibility that the previous personality had been a Burmese. Formerly, some members of the Burmese royal family had worn earrings attached through the lobes. However, the last king of Burma, Thibaw, was deposed in 1885, and modern Burmese men did not wear earrings.

Maung Nyunt's Birthmarks

Figures 8-13 and 8-14 show the birthmarks on Maung Nyunt's ears to be slight depressions at the back of each helix. They were oval in shape and about 1 millimeter by 2 millimeters. They were in the same location on each ear.

As I mentioned, Maung Nyunt said the marks had been more prominent when he was born, but the pitlike depressions in his ears had not penetrated completely through the helices, so that there had been no hole going through the ears.[28]

Maung Nyunt had said that the pony-cart driver whose life he recalled had landed on his head when he fell out of the cart. This made me expect that Maung Nyunt would have a birthmark at the top of his head, and I examined him there in 1984. However, I found no evidence of a birthmark there. Furthermore, Maung Nyunt said that when he was 14 years old, he had entered a (Buddhist) monastery as a novice for a time. During this period his head had been shaven and no birthmark was found then.[29]

Maung Nyunt's Physical Appearance

In a later chapter of this work, I discuss the face as a kind of birthmark. Here I wish only to mention that Maung Nyunt's facial appearance was that of an Indian more than that of a Burman. He lacked the configuration of the eyes characteristic of Mongolian people, including the Burmese.

THE CASE OF MA HTWE YIN

Summary of the Case and Its Investigation

Ma Htwe Yin was born in Rangoon, Burma, on August 7, 1948. Her parents were U Soe Maung and his wife, Daw Aye Hla. Ma Htwe Yin was the third of their five children who survived infancy. She had two older brothers and two younger sisters. U Soe Maung was a pony-cart driver and a market gardener. His wife, Daw Aye Hla, at the time I met her, had a small business as a shopkeeper.

[28]Maung Nyunt's case should be compared with that of Ma Htwe Yin, who remembered the previous life of an Indian man and who had birthmarks on her ears closely resembling those of Maung Nyunt.

[29]In not having a birthmark at the top of his head, Maung Nyunt seems exceptional among subjects who remember previous lives that ended in falling on the head. Ones who did have such birthmarks include: Maung Zaw Thein Lwin, Dellâl Beyaz, Sunita Khandelwal, and Wilfred Meares.

Figure 8-15 Left ear of Ma Htwe Yin as it appeared in April 1979, when she was 30½ years old. The birthmark was a small depression or pit near the top of the helix. It was about 2 millimeters long by 1 millimeter wide and about 0.5 millimeter deep.

After Ma Htwe Yin was conceived, her mother had a dream in which, returning to her home from somewhere, she was followed by an Indian man. She pushed the Indian into a disused well, but when she reached her home, she found the Indian had already arrived there ahead of her. She was vainly trying to drive him away again when she woke up. She was then 3 or 4 months pregnant with Ma Htwe Yin.

When Ma Htwe Yin was born, she had holes at the back of each of the helices of her ears. The holes subsequently closed up so that in 1979 they had the appearance shown in Figures 8-15 and 8-16. Ma Htwe Yin also was born with a long tuft of hair at the back of her head, which I shall describe further later.

Figure 8-16 Right ear of Ma Htwe Yin as it appeared in April 1979, when she was about 30½ years old. The birthmark was slightly inferior in location compared with the one on the left ear. However, its dimensions were approximately the same.

When Ma Htwe Yin was about 2 years old, she began to make statements about a previous life that she remembered as an Indian man. She continued talking about this life until she was 5. She also showed some masculine traits and other behavior that was unusual in her family but appropriate for the life she claimed to remember. No person corresponding to her statements was ever identified.

U Win Maung first learned of this case in 1975, and on August 20, 1975, he recorded a statement about the case from Daw Aye Hla at her home in Rangoon. U Soe Maung had died before 1975. In March 1978 U Win Maung and I met Daw Aye Hla again and obtained additional information about the case. Ma Htwe Yin

herself was then away from Rangoon. However, we were able to meet her in April 1979 at which time we noted a small amount of further information about the case.

In February 1986 U Win Maung had another meeting with Ma Htwe Yin and her mother, again at her mother's house in Rangoon.

By the time U Win Maung and I investigated this case, Ma Htwe Yin had largely forgotten the memories that she had had earlier. Our principal informant for Ma Htwe Yin's statements and behavior when she was a young child was therefore her mother, Daw Aye Hla. However, a friend and neighbor (known to U Win Maung), Daw Aye Myint, furnished some corroborating information.

Statements Made by Ma Htwe Yin

Ma Htwe Yin (when she was between 2 and 5 years old) said that she had been an Indian man who kept cows and buffaloes whose milk he sold. She did not give his name. She said that this man had lived in the Kywegone Quarter, Kanbe, in Rangoon. (This is about 1 kilometer from where she was born.) The Indian milkman had been married and had children.

When Ma Htwe Yin was young, there was a teashop near her family's house. Ma Htwe Yin used to say that the owners of this shop, an Indian and his Burmese wife, owed the Indian milkman she claimed to have been 1500 rupees for milk that he had supplied them. Whenever Ma Htwe Yin's parents would patronize this teashop, she would say that they should not pay any bill; instead, she insisted, the charges should be credited against the debt the owners of the teashop owed the milkman. Ma Htwe Yin also used to importune her parents to buy tea and cakes only from this teashop, presumably in order to reduce as much as possible the debt she claimed the shopkeeper owed. In fact, her parents covertly paid the teashop owners for whatever they consumed or purchased. Daw Hla Ngwe, the Burmese woman of the couple who owned the teashop, acknowledged the existence of the debt mentioned by Ma Htwe Yin. However, Ma Htwe Yin's family did not pursue this lead, and they never identified any Indian milkman whose life corresponded to Ma Htwe Yin's statements. By the time U Win Maung and I worked on the case, Daw Hla Ngwe and her husband had both died. It is worth noting, however, that Indians dealing in dairy products such as milk used to live in the Kywegone quarter of Rangoon; the name *Kywegone* means "buffalo place." Also, Hindu Indians had a monopoly in the sale of milk where Ma Htwe Yin's family lived, so they bought milk from one or more of them.

Ma Htwe Yin did not say how the Indian milkman had died in the life she was remembering.

Ma Htwe Yin's Behavior Related to the Previous Life

Ma Htwe Yin's Vegetarianism. Although nearly all Burmese Buddhists are meat eaters, Ma Htwe Yin would not eat beef and showed a marked preference for vegetables over meat. As she grew older, she ate more meat, such as chicken

and mutton. After her marriage she ate pork, mainly from necessity, because she was then living with her husband's family. But she still would not eat beef.

Ma Htwe Yin's Masculine Behavior. Ma Htwe Yin showed some masculine traits when she was a young child. In talking she would use the masculine verb forms instead of the feminine ones. (Some verb forms in Burmese change with the sex of the speaker.) She had some preference for playing boys' games. She was noted to be energetic and willing to engage in hard manual labor, such as digging in a garden. Daw Aye Hla also considered a fearlessness that she had noted in her daughter a masculine trait.

Ma Htwe Yin did not have her menarche until the age of 17, an age considerably above the average age of menarche in Burma, which is 13.2 years (Foll, 1961). Her menstruation was at first irregular and did not become adjusted into a regular cycle until she was in her middle 20s.

Ma Htwe Yin did not show other masculine traits, such as cross-dressing, that many subjects who remember previous lives as members of the opposite sex have shown.

Ma Htwe Yin's Birthmarks

As I mentioned earlier, the birthmarks on Ma Htwe Yin's ears were actually holes through the helices when she was born. Daw Aye Hla said that the holes closed up when Ma Htwe Yin was about a year old. They had not changed in position on the ears.

As Figures 8-15 and 8-16 show, Ma Htwe Yin's birthmarks were actually small depressions or pits at the back of the external surface of each helix. They were at slightly different levels, but had almost the same dimensions: approximately 2 millimeters long, 1 millimeter wide, and 0.5 millimeter deep.

Daw Aye Hla said that no other member of the family had birthmarks like those of Ma Htwe Yin. (She had 10 children altogether, of whom five survived infancy.) Nor had she or her husband had such birthmarks.

Ma Htwe Yin's Other Physical Features

Ma Htwe Yin at birth also had a long tuft of hair growing from the superior part of her head. In 1976 Daw Aye Hla told U Win Maung that the tuft of hair was about 20 centimeters long. Daw Aye Myint recalled seeing the tuft of hair at the top of Ma Htwe Yin's head when she was born; but she remembered it as having been only about 15 centimeters long. It was shaved off when the baby was 2 or 3 weeks old.

Ma Htwe Yin was also considered rather darker in complexion than other members of her family. (Indians are usually more dark-complected than Burmans.) However, a photograph of her father, U Soe Maung, showed (or seemed to show) that he was even darker than his daughter.

In contrast to my judgment about Maung Nyunt, I did not think that Ma Htwe Yin's facial appearance was more like that of an Indian than a Burmese.

Comment. As I explained in connection with the case of Maung Nyunt, Indian men (in Burma and elsewhere) often wear earrings through the helices of the ears. It was (and is) common also for Hindu men to allow a tuft of a few hairs to grow out (at the top of the head) much longer than the remainder of the hair. Figure 8-17 shows such a tuft, called a *choti*, on a boy in India. This is a custom of Hindus, not of Moslems. According to Indian Hindu folklore, the tuft of hair is helpful to those persons concerned with lifting a deceased person into heaven; they can pull him up by the long tuft.

Ma Htwe Yin's Later Development

Ma Htwe Yin attended school in Rangoon until she was about 20 years old. She reached and passed the 10th grade and then left school.

She remained rather masculine in her traits during her young childhood, but her mother thought she had become fairly feminine by the age of 15 or 16. And

Figure 8-17 Indian boy (in Uttar Pradesh, India) with tuft of hair (choti) allowed to grow longer than the other hairs. This photograph was taken in 1983.

yet, as I mentioned, she did not menstruate until she was 17 and did not develop regular menses until her middle 20s.

When she was 28, a marriage was arranged for her, but she did not like the idea of getting married and cried pitifully at the time. (A neighbor, Daw Aye Myint, corroborated Daw Aye Hla's statement about Ma Htwe Yin's reluctance to marry.) However, once married, Ma Htwe Yin appears to have adjusted well to her situation. Her husband was a trader at Lashio in the Shan States, and she lived with him there, coming back to Rangoon once a year to visit her mother. When U Win Maung and I met her in 1979, she had one child, a son (who, incidentally, had no birthmarks on his ears; I examined him myself). She was mothering him well, so far as we could tell.

When we met Ma Htwe Yin again in 1986, she had four children; none had birthmarks like hers. Her birthmarks were just as prominent as they had been in 1979.

Although Daw Aye Hla said that Ma Htwe Yin had stopped speaking spontaneously about the previous life when she was about 5, Ma Htwe Yin evidently continued to have some memories of it thereafter. In 1979, when she was not quite 31 years old, she said that she could no longer remember anything about the previous life; but she thought that she had remembered it until she had been about 20. However, in 1986 she said that she still had some fading memories of the previous life, so she may have had some intermittent loss and recovery of the memories.

THE CASE OF CHINTA CHANDRASIRI

Summary of the Case and Its Investigation

Chinta Chandrasiri was born in Madampe, Sri Lanka, on May 22, 1962. Her parents were L. Suduringe and his wife, P. S. Suduringe. Chinta was the youngest of their five children. She had three older sisters and an older brother. L. Suduringe was a college graduate and worked as a schoolteacher. Chinta's family were Sinhalese and formally Buddhists, although Chinta's father was skeptical about religion and inclined toward Marxism.

When Chinta was born, she had a hole in the helix of each ear (Figures 8-18 and 8-19). She also had a red circular mark on her forehead. When Chinta became older, she showed an unusual—for her family—preference for Tamil people, their customs, and their foods. She never expressed any imaged memories of a previous life. Since Tamil women wore earrings in the helices of their ears, whereas Sinhalese women did not, Chinta's family thought that, on the evidence of the holes in her ears and her "Tamil habits," she was probably the reincarnation of a Tamil woman. However, they never identified her with any specific deceased person.

Tissa Jayawardene learned of this case early in 1981. On February 10, 1981, he went to Madampe, where he met and interviewed Chinta and her mother. He also photographed Chinta's ears. On April 5, 1981, Godwin Samararatne had a long interview (also at Madampe) with Chinta's mother, during which he obtained

Figure 8-18 Left ear of Chinta Chandrasiri as it appeared in February 1981, when she was almost 19 years old. The birthmark was a small pit on the posterior surface of the helix. It was about 1 millimeter deep, 1 millimeter wide and 2 millimeters long. Its base had increased pigmentation compared with the surrounding skin.

more detailed information about Chinta's "Tamil habits" and the relations between her family and the Tamils and Moslems of the area where they lived.

In 1982 Chinta married and settled with her husband in the village of Guruniwasa, in the Gampaha District. On October 4, 1982, I met her (and her husband) there. Godwin Samararatne and Tissa Jayawardene were with me, and we tried to fill in the remaining gaps in the information available for the case. On October 30, 1985, Tissa Jayawardene met Chinta's mother again at Madampe and clarified some details of the case for me.

Figure 8-19 Right ear of Chinta Chandrasiri as it appeared in February 1981, when she was almost 19 years old. The birthmark was much less prominent than that on the left helix. It was also lower on the helix than the birthmark on the left helix. It can be seen at the level of the middle finger of the hand holding Chinta's ear for the photograph. The birthmark seemed to be fractionally depressed below the level of the surrounding skin, but essentially consisted of a small area of increased pigmentation, about 1 millimeter by 2 millimeters in extent.

Relevant Information about the Ethnic and Religious Communities of Sri Lanka

Most of the Tamils of Sri Lanka live in the northern and eastern parts of the island. However, there are many Tamils in the central highlands, to which their ancestors came for work on the tea estates. Tamils also live along the western coast and in Colombo.

Under the British and for the first few decades after Sri Lanka (then Ceylon) became independent in 1948, Tamils and Sinhalese lived on the whole harmoniously and often in the same communities. In the 1970s and 1980s, ill-feeling developed, communal riots occurred, and eventually Tamil extremists resorted to open guerilla warfare.

Tamils speak the Tamil language and practice the Hindu religion. They are mainly vegetarians, although they may eat mutton; some of their food preparations differ significantly from those preferred by the Sinhalese.

Moslems, many descended from Arabic traders and often called Moors in Sri Lanka, live mainly on the west coast and adjacent inland areas; but there are important groups of Moslems in Kandy and elsewhere. The Moslems of Sri Lanka usually speak Tamil.

The several major religious communities of Sri Lanka have influenced each other's beliefs and practices. For example, the compounds of Buddhist Temples nearly always have also a small Hindu temple, and the Buddhists, as I mentioned in connection with the case of Sampath Priyasantha, often appeal to Hindu gods. Some Sinhalese Christians believe in reincarnation. The Hindu god Kataragama (also known as Skanda, who is the son of Siva), whose principal shrine is at a place of that name in southeastern Sri Lanka, has the status of a national god, since adherents of all religions make pilgrimages to Kataragama and appeal to the god for assistance.

The Sinhalese women wear earrings in the lobes of their ears, but the Moslems and the Tamils wear them in the helices. (Among the Moslem women this fashion was dying out in the 1980s.) The Tamil priests also wear earrings.

In sum, the Sinhalese Buddhists and Tamil Hindus (as well as other ethnic and religious groups in Sri Lanka) have influenced each other's customs, and yet they have also retained distinct features of their cultures.

Relationships of Chinta's Family with Other Religious Groups

In the area of Madampe, Sinhalese Buddhists lived peacefully close to Tamil Hindus and Moslems. Chinta's mother, P. S. Suduringe, said that she frequented the Hindu temple in Madampe and was friendly with the wives of the priests. She spoke some Tamil. She was an adherent of some Hindu gods and so were her two sisters. Her father (Chinta's maternal grandfather) had been syncretic in his religion, and she had probably derived her attachment to Hindu gods from his practices; he had made vows, prayers, and offerings to Hindu gods. Chinta's mother had had friendly relations also with the Moslems of the area.

Chinta's mother thought that she had had more contact with Tamil families during her pregnancy with Chinta than she had had at other times. However, she had not attended a funeral of any Tamil women prior to becoming pregnant with Chinta.[30]

[30]This information derived from a question Godwin Samararatne asked. He was probing for the possibility that Chinta's mother had become pregnant after seeing the body of someone recently dead and that Chinta might be that person reincarnated. Examples of such connections have occurred frequently among cases in Burma, and sometimes in the cases of other countries. In the report of the case of Maung Aye Kyaw I give a partial list of such cases.

Chinta's father, who, as I mentioned, was indifferent to formal religion (or perhaps opposed to it) seems not to have mingled with the groups outside his own community of Sinhalese Buddhists; or he did so less than his wife.

A Pregnancy Craving

P. S. Suduringe said that during her pregnancy with Chinta she was fond of a special kind of curry soup, *pooliaman*, which Tamils prepare and relish. She did not have this craving during her other four pregnancies.[31]

Chinta's Behavior Related to the Previous Life

Chinta showed a preference for Tamil food and was particularly fond of a preparation called *those*, which is a kind of bread. Other members of the family liked those, but Chinta liked it more than they did. Chinta was not a vegetarian, but her mother said that she liked meat less than other members of the family.

Chinta was particularly fond of pooliaman, but did not care for the way this was prepared in her Sinhalese home. Instead, she wanted to have the pooliaman that was cooked at a Hindu (Tamil) temple that was about 0.5 kilometer from her family's house.

Chinta herself remembered, when we met her in 1982, that she had also liked another Tamil preparation, *ooloondoo wade*.

She must have taken some of her food preferences into her marriage, because when prompted by her husband in 1982, she remembered that she also still liked pooliaman, of which her mother had been unusually fond during her pregnancy with Chinta.

Chinta seems to have been unusually fond of Tamil people. Although her mother did not think that Chinta had liked Tamil children more than her sisters did, she herself told Tissa Jayawardene that most of her friends had been Tamil children. This would be unusual for a Sinhalese child.

Sometimes Chinta and her sisters during play had assumed the roles of Tamil and Moslem women. During such play the children would put on clothes to look like saris and would pretend to be speaking Tamil (although they did not actually understand the language). Chinta's mother did not remember whether Chinta, during this kind of play, had preferred to take the role of a Tamil woman more than her sisters.

Chinta said that she approved of marriages between the different ethnic and religious groups of Sri Lanka. However, she never expressed a wish (at least to her mother) to marry a Tamil man. When she married, her husband was a Sinhalese Buddhist.

[31]Other examples of pregnant women who had unusual appetites or other behavior during pregnancy with a subject who later showed a similar craving or behavior occurred in the cases of Bongkuch Promsin, Maung Myint Tin, Ornuma Sua Ying Yong, Gamini Jayasena, Sujith Lakmal Jayaratne, Ma Choe Hnin Htet, and Disna Samarasinghe.

When Chinta was about 17 and approaching the age of marriage, she expressed a wish to be married according to Hindu procedures. (However, when, a few years later, she married, her marriage was conducted in the Buddhist form.)

Chinta's Other Relevant Behavior

Chinta never made any statements suggesting that she had imaged memories of a previous life. She never pointed to the birthmarks she had and said what their origin was. Nor did she ask to have her ears pierced in the helices. The lobes of her ears were pierced for earrings when she was about 14 years old.

Chinta's Birthmarks

Chinta's mother said that both her ears were fully penetrated by holes when she was born and that she noticed this the day Chinta was born. Chinta herself thought (in 1982) that when she was born only her left ear had a hole entirely through the ear, but not the right ear.

The holes (or hole) in the ears later closed up, so that by the time of our photographs, in 1981 and 1982, only pits remained at the sites of the former holes.

The remaining marks on Chinta's ears differed slightly in appearance and location. The left ear (Figure 8-18) had a definite small pit, about 1 millimeter deep with other dimensions about 1 millimeter by 2 millimeters. The area had increased pigmentation compared with the surrounding skin.

On the right ear (Figure 8-19) the mark was lower than that on the left ear. On this ear there was the suggestion of a slight depression at the site of the mark, but the main feature was increased pigmentation compared with the surrounding skin.

Figure 8-20 shows a Tamil woman of Sri Lanka wearing an earring in approximately the place of the holes in Chinta's ears.

As I mentioned earlier, Chinta had another birthmark more or less in the center of her forehead. This was red, round, and about 1 centimeter in diameter. Although it was not painful to touch, it suggested an inflammation, and Chinta's parents consulted doctors about whether it needed treatment. Eventually the mark became less prominent, although a residue remained. The mark shifted in position to some extent as Chinta grew up. When I examined her in 1982, I could see at the root of her nose only some faint suggestion of dermatitis.

Chinta's family, at the stage when they considered the mark on her forehead an inflammation, thought that it might have come from a mosquito bite. Later, it occurred to them that the mark might derive from the previous life. It had some resemblance to the circular mark (tilak mark) applied to the center of the forehead by many Hindus.

Other Relevant Medical Information. No other member of the family had holes in the ears at birth like Chinta's.

Figure 8-20 Tamil woman of Sri Lanka wearing earrings in the helix of her ear; one is at approximately the location of the birthmarks on Chinta Chandrasiri's ears.

Comment

The birthmarks on Chinta's ears are the outstanding feature of the case. I attach less importance to the "Tamil habits" that both Chinta and her mother said she had had. I have emphasized that Chinta's family were entirely free of the strong communal feeling and animosity toward Tamils that some Sinhalese have. They were at ease with the Tamils and also with the Moslems. It is possible that members of Chinta's family, having noticed the birthmarks on her ears, decided that she had been a Tamil in a previous life, and thereafter assigned her the role of a Tamil. She might have responded to such a suggestion by adopting "Tamil habits" more than she might otherwise have done.

However, the friendliness of the Suduringe family toward Tamils could also have a place in the case, if it is best interpreted as one of reincarnation. For precisely such friendliness would perhaps facilitate the birth in the Suduringe home of a discarnate personality who had lived a terrestrial life as a Tamil.[32]

INTRODUCTION TO CASES OF NORTHWESTERN NORTH AMERICA WHOSE SUBJECTS HAD BIRTHMARKS CORRESPONDING TO EARRING WOUNDS

The subjects of the following three cases all had birthmarks on their ears that informants said corresponded to holes pierced for earrings. The subjects were all males and the deceased persons of whom they were said to be the reincarnations were also males.

For reasons that I shall mention in the case reports I have only met (and examined the ears of) one of the three subjects. However, I obtained what I regard as satisfactory testimony about the birthmarks of the subjects in the other two cases. Although I have no photographs of the birthmarks in these two cases, I have included sketches that I made of them from the descriptions of persons who had seen the birthmarks.

The birthmarks that I observed or had described to me were all (or mostly) in the upper parts of the helices of the ears, approximately in the positions of the birthmarks on Maung Nyunt, Chinta Chandrasiri, Arya Bhushan, and Ma Htwe Yin. However, none of three elderly informants, all born between 1901 and 1904, remembered seeing tribal men wearing earrings high up on the ears (although they had heard of this custom from earlier days). One of them, Jeff Johnson (a Tsimshian born in 1902), remembered seeing men of his tribe wearing earrings in the lobes or lower parts of the ears, but not so high as the birthmarks indicated. This led me to make further inquiries for evidence that male members of the tribes had worn earrings in their helices.

My first item of evidence was a portrait of a Tlingit chief (Figure 8-21) that is now the property of the Museum of Northern British Columbia (in Prince Rupert) and sometimes displayed there. I think a white line of paint extending between the chief's ear and his hat represents an earring in the helix. However, three persons whose opinions I respect suggested that this white line might have been a mistake by the artist and not intended to depict an earring. In response to this skepticism I sought better evidence. The artist, Charles Dudoward, was a Tsimshian. He had died, but his daughter Betty Dudoward Sampson, was still living, and I met and talked with her in Port Simpson. Unfortunately, she could not

[32]The Indian family of Govind Narain Mishra (Chapter 11) provides a parallel to Chinta's family in this conjecture. They—Brahmins by caste—welcomed in their family three children who claimed respectively to have been in previous lives a sweeperess, a Dhobi (washerman), and a Moslem.

Figure 8-21 Painting of a Tlingit chief by Charles Dudoward (?1882-1973). A white line extending from the upper part of the chief's left ear to the line of his hat may represent an earring worn in the helix of the ear. (Courtesy of the Museum of Northern British Columbia, Prince Rupert, B. C., Canada.)

recall the painting. She said that her father might have painted it, as he did some other paintings, from a photograph. I had no evidence, therefore, that Charles Dudoward, who lived from about 1882 until 1973, had seen and painted a Tlingit chief wearing an earring, although he may have done this.

Continuing the search for additional evidence, I turned to the Royal British Columbia Museum in Victoria, and Grant Keddie (a Research Curator of the Museum) became interested in the matter. He found a photograph of an engraving

Figure 8-22 Callicum and Maquilla, chiefs of Nootka Sound. Drawn by T. Stothard, from a sketch by John Meares, engraved by R. Pollard for *Voyages Made in the Years 1788 and 1789*. (From Meares, 1790.) (Courtesy of the Royal British Columbia Museum, Victoria, B. C., Canada.)

showing two chiefs of the Nootka tribe each wearing multiple earrings that extend from the lower parts of the ear up into the helices (Figure 8-22).

Jeff Johnson told me that when the Tsimshian men wore earrings "in the old days," they pierced a new hole every time they gave a potlatch. As a potlatch signaled a man's wealth, generosity, and prestige, one without earrings was regarded as a "nobody."

Another informant, Jean Slade (a Gitksan), who was born in 1900, remembered hearing about a ceremony called *Namoo* in which the ears of a young boy, of perhaps 5 or 6 years, would be pierced for earrings.

The question arose of when the custom of men (or women) wearing earrings high up on the ears was discontinued. I once incorrectly believed this to have happened around the turn of the century; I reasoned that otherwise my older informants would have seen men wearing such earrings. I inferred that the practice had continued at least until the later years of the 19th century because of the dates of birth (known with fair accuracy) of the two youngest of the three deceased men of whom the subjects of the cases I investigated were said to be the reincarnations. One of these two men was born in 1856 and the other in 1891. (The third deceased person, a more remote chief, was probably born in the first half of the 19th century.) Emmons (1991) mentioned a Tongass woman, a Tlingit, who dreamed during a pregnancy "of her [maternal] aunt, a woman of high caste who had many perforations in the rims of her ears....The child, when born, had a number of scars and holes about the edges of the ears" (Emmons, 1991, p. 288). She took this to indicate that the aunt had reincarnated as the child. Unfortunately, Emmons gave no date for this case. We know that he was mainly active in his anthropological work during the last two decades of the 19th century and the first decade of the 20th; yet he also continued to obtain information about the Tlingit until his death in 1945. Mills (1994) obtained evidence that the practice of ear-piercing for females continued into the 1940s. She also investigated and reported two additional cases of pierced-ear birthmarks among the Gitksan.

THE CASE OF EDWARD TAYLOR

Summary of the Case and Its Investigation

Edward Taylor was born in Hazelton, British Columbia, Canada, on November 26, 1973. His parents were Wilbur Taylor and his wife, Alice. Edward had an older sister and at least one brother, but I did not learn his birth order in the family. (His parents divorced when he was a young child.) They were members of the Gitksan tribe. Wilbur Taylor had been a band manager.

Edward was born with a mark at the back of the helix of each ear (Figures 8-23 and 8-24). A resident of Hazelton, Patrick Carter, had died the year before Edward's birth after predicting that he would be reincarnated and stay in the home of a relative by marriage (Jean Slade) of whom he was evidently fond. Edward was this man's classificatory great-nephew. Patrick Carter's ears had been pierced

Figure 8-23 Left ear of Edward Taylor, as it appeared in August 1979, when he was nearly 6 years old. The birthmark was a small depression or pit about 4 millimeters long and 1 millimeter wide. It had increased pigmentation compared with the surrounding skin.

for earrings, and Edward's birthmarks were considered evidence that Patrick had reincarnated as planned.

When Edward became able to speak, he made some statements and showed behavior suggestive of memories of Patrick Carter's life.

Dr. David Barker learned of this case when on a field trip in British Columbia in August 1978. He was able to interview (in Hazelton) Edward's mother, Alice Taylor, and also Patrick Carter's daughter, Irene Carter Franklin. In the following year I continued the investigation of the case, and on August 21 and 22, 1979, I interviewed Irene Carter Franklin again as well as two other informants for the case. I also met Edward and photographed his birthmarks.

Figure 8-24 Right ear of Edward Taylor, as it appeared in August 1979, when he was nearly 6 years old. The birthmark resembled that on the left ear, but was less depressed.

Persons Interviewed during the Investigation

In Hazelton we interviewed:

Alice Taylor, Edward's mother
Jean Slade, Alice Taylor's grandmother and Edward's great-grandmother
Irene Carter Franklin, Patrick Carter's daughter
Arnold Walker, senior villager

I have not listed Edward above, because although I chatted a little with him as I photographed his ears, I do not consider our exchange an interview.

When I tried to meet Alice Taylor, she was not at home, and I have used Dr. Barker's notes of her testimony. I was also unable to meet Frances Clark, Patrick Carter's widow. She had remarried, and her second husband, James Clark, was jealous of Patrick Carter. I was told that he would become annoyed if his wife discussed her former husband in his presence, and as this could not have been avoided, I abandoned my plan to meet her. For a reason that I have not recorded in my notes, I also did not talk with Henry Franklin, who was one of the persons to whom Patrick Carter had predicted that he would reincarnate in his family.

Jean Slade was 79 years old in 1979, and she did not speak English fluently. Irene Carter Franklin and Arnold Walker spoke Gitksan with her and interpreted for me.

Dr. Antonia Mills studied this case in 1984 and again in 1990. Subsequently, she published a report of the case, somewhat shorter than the present one (Mills, 1994.)

The Life and Death of Patrick Carter

My information about Patrick Carter derives mainly from his daughter, Irene Carter Franklin, and from Jean Slade. I obtained some additional information from a copy of his death certificate.

Patrick Carter was born in Kispiox in 1891. He appears to have lived all his life in the area of Hazelton. His father had been a hereditary chief of the Gitksan, and his mother was also a chief. This double lineage of nobility made Patrick a special person, and in due course he became a chief himself. He married and had at least one daughter, Irene Carter Franklin, who was born relatively late in his life. He also had at least one son.

Irene Carter Franklin said that her father's ears had marks on them and looked "as if they had been pierced."[33] She thought it probable that his ears had been pierced when he was a child because of the important status that he had through both his parents being chiefs. She had never examined her father's ears closely and could not say that holes went completely through his ears. She could not remember ever seeing her father wear earrings, so he must have stopped doing this before she was old enough to notice his appearance. I did not learn her age, but in 1979 she appeared to me to be in her early 30s; this would mean that Patrick Carter was in his 50s when she was born, perhaps in about 1947. The custom of men wearing earrings had been long since abandoned.

[33]Toward the end of his life, Patrick Carter became deaf and wore hearing aids, one in each ear. In her interview with Dr. Barker in 1978, Irene Carter Franklin suggested that Edward's birthmarks corresponded to marks left by the hearing aids that, she said, Patrick Carter clipped onto his ears. When I took up the further investigation of the case in 1979, I started with the assumption that Edward's birthmarks corresponded to marks that the hearing aids might have made on Patrick Carter's ears. However, Irene Carter Franklin spontaneously mentioned to me that when her father took off his hearing aids, she saw marks that looked as if his ears "had been pierced." This led to the further inquiries that convinced me that Patrick Carter's ears had been pierced, probably when he was a young child.

Jean Slade said that she had seen holes in Patrick Carter's ears, but she had not seen him wearing earrings.

Patrick Carter predicted that he would reincarnate in the family of his daughter, Irene Carter Franklin. According to Arnold Walker, he said to Henry Franklin, who was Irene Carter Franklin's father-in-law and Alice Taylor's father: "After I die, I will come back to this house." By referring to "this house" (Henry Franklin's), Patrick Carter obliquely implied that he would return in his daughter's family.

Jean Slade told me that she had heard Patrick Carter make a more detailed prediction and give the reasons for his choice. She had heard him say to Henry Franklin that he would come back as Alice's child, but would stay with Henry Franklin, because he had a car. He had added: "I want to ride in a car. There are three cars here. I do not want to hitchhike." To this Henry had replied: "OK. I will look after you." Irene Carter Franklin gave Dr. Barker a shorter version of the same prediction. She told him that her father "used to tell Granny [Jean Slade] that he would be born to Alice, but he wanted to stay with Henry and his wife."

Alice Taylor told Dr. Barker that Patrick Carter had said he would "come back in the family" and that he had told Jean Slade "he wanted to stay with her." However, she did not learn about these remarks until after Edward's birth.

Patrick Carter's death certificate states that he died at the age of 81 on April 20, 1972. His death was attributed to arteriosclerotic heart disease with cardiac failure.

Statements Made by Edward

I learned little about direct statements that Edward may have made about the previous life. (I think my preoccupation with his birthmarks led me to neglect this aspect of the case.) Irene Carter Franklin said (in 1978) she had heard from Jean Slade that Edward "only talks about his wife, Frances."

Edward's Behavior Related to the Previous Life

Edward did not thrive in his parents' home. He showed a strong preference for staying with Jean Slade and her family. Irene Carter Franklin said that Edward became ill when he was with his parents, but recovered when with Jean Slade. Edward seems to have told his mother, more or less directly, that he did not wish to stay with her. At the age of about 4 he moved to Jean Slade's house.

Edward showed strong jealousy toward the new husband of Patrick Carter's widow, Frances Clark (as she became). He would "give him the evil eye" when he saw him. Edward learned that the house in Hazelton in which Patrick Carter had lived had been torn down. He became angry and asked who had done this. When told that it was James Clark, the new husband of Patrick Carter's widow, he asked for a knife and said he would go and cut him up.[34]

[34]Necip Ünlütaşkıran, Dorabeth Crosby, Taru Järvi, and Semih Tutuşmuş were other subjects who expressed jealousy toward a new spouse of the person whose life the subject remembered.

Comment. Edward's preference for Jean Slade's home over that of his parents may have derived from the unhappy marriage of his parents, which ended in divorce. Also, in going to Jean Slade's home, he was still on the same street as his parents' home and only a few houses away from it. He was at his mother's home when I met and photographed him in 1979.

Edward's Birthmarks

Figures 8-23 and 8-24 show the appearance in 1979 of the birthmarks on Edward's ears. Both were areas of increased pigmentation compared with the surrounding skin. The skin was slightly depressed at each mark; the pit was deeper on the left ear than on the right one. The marks were about 4 millimeters long and 1 millimeter wide. Careful examination showed that there were actually two pits on each ear, close to each other—almost merging.

Alice Taylor (in talking with Dr. Barker in 1978) had an incorrect memory of Edward's birthmarks; she said that she could not remember them, but thought he had two marks on one ear.

Irene Carter Franklin said (also in 1978) with regard to Edward's ears: "They look like his ears were pierced."

Edward's birthmarks were noticed when he was a baby, but I did not learn exactly how long after his birth.

Other Relevant Medical Information. Edward had no impairment of hearing.

Jean Slade, who at her advanced age had a panoramic view of the entire family, said that no other member had birthmarks like Edward's. Irene Carter Franklin concurred in this observation. She had examined Edward's older sister and found that she had no birthmarks at the sites of Edward's.

THE CASE OF GEORGE TOMLINSON

George Tomlinson, a Tsimshian, was born in Prince Rupert, British Columbia, Canada, on February 10, 1947. At his birth he was found to have four birthmarks on each ear. I first learned about his case in May 1977 when (with Dr. David Barker) I interviewed George's maternal grandmother, Flora Gamble, in Prince Rupert. (She was the mother of Alan Gamble, whose case I described earlier.) In June 1980, I met George's mother, Muriel Johnson, in Vancouver.

George's maternal grandfather had a dream about Isaiah Tomlinson, a distant relative, and George was identified as the reincarnation of Isaiah on the basis of this dream and of the correspondence between his birthmarks and holes pierced for earrings that Isaiah had had.

Flora Gamble said George had four birthmarks on each ear. The lowest marks were dimples in the lobes; the other three were higher and on the upper parts of the ears; these were not depressed, but only areas of increased pigmen-

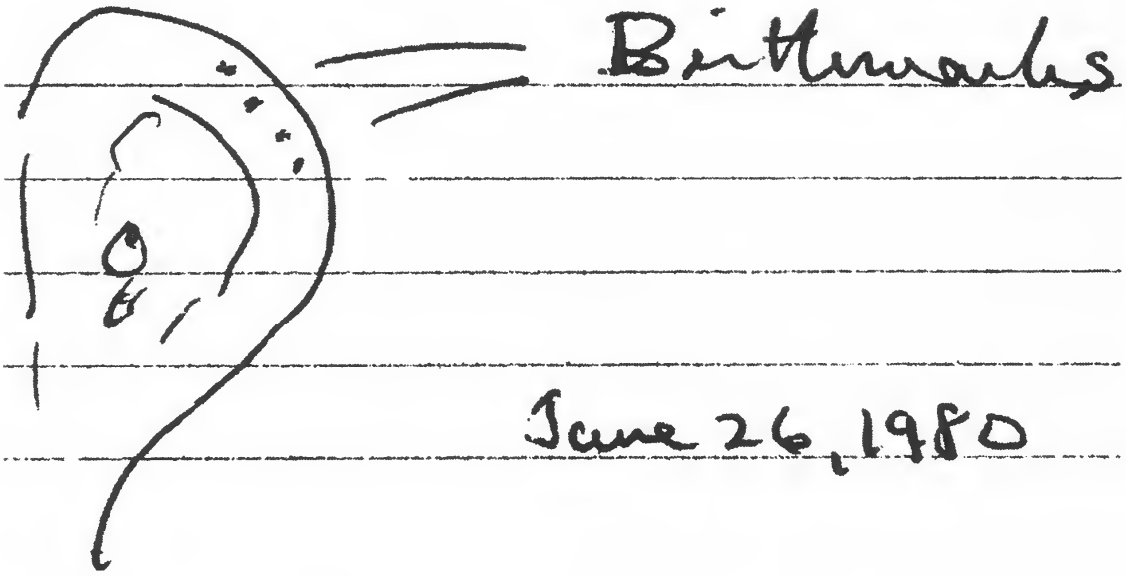

Figure 8-25 Sketch made from description of birthmarks on George Tomlinson's ear given by his mother, Muriel Johnson.

tation. The depressions on the lobes did not penetrate the ear, so that there was no hole through it.

Muriel Johnson (George's mother) remembered the four birthmarks as all being small round depressions or hollows on the edge of the ear. She said that they did not go all the way through the ears. She mentioned birthmarks on the helices only, not on the lobes of the ears. I made the sketch of Figure 8-25 during our interview.

Isaiah Tomlinson had died at Kitkatla in 1934 at the age of 78. He was born, therefore, in about 1856, well within the period when males of the northwest coast tribes wore earrings in the helices of their ears.

George Tomlinson died of acute leukemia at the age of 14 on December 1, 1961. I therefore have no photograph of his birthmarks. I also have no additional information about his case and do not know whether he ever made statements referring to the life of Isaiah Tomlinson or showed behavior that might have derived from it. This omission arose because during each of my interviews with the two informants for the case I was focusing my attention on other cases the subjects of which were still alive, and I did not make detailed inquiries about this one. Subsequently, Flora Gamble died, and I lost contact with Muriel Johnson.

THE CASE OF WILLIAM TOLMIE

William Tolmie, a Tsimshian, was born in Metlakatla, British Columbia, Canada, in 1926. At the time of his birth, his paternal grandmother, Susan Tolmie,

dreamed that her uncle, a prominent chief called Kah-kova, was returning to the family. On the basis of her dream and of birthmarks on the ears of William, she identified him as Kah-kova reborn.

I met William Tolmie's mother, Sarah Tolmie, in Port Simpson in May 1975, and she was my principal informant for the case. Susan Tolmie's dream stimulated members of the family to examine William for birthmarks when he was born. He was then found to have three birthmarks on the helices of both ears. Sarah Tolmie said: "There were no holes, but marks as if there had been holes that had healed up." The marks were visible on both sides of the outer folds of the helices. Sarah Tolmie could not say whether the birthmarks were still visible in 1975 or not. (William then lived in Prince Rupert.) They had been visible at least up to the time he was a teenager. I made a sketch of the location of the birthmarks from her description (Figure 8-26).

Subsequently, in 1981, I met William Tolmie's younger sister, Gertrude Wilson, also at Port Simpson. She had seen the birthmarks on her brother's ears and remembered that there were two or three of them and that they were above the lobe. She put her hand to the middle of the helix of her own ear to indicate their

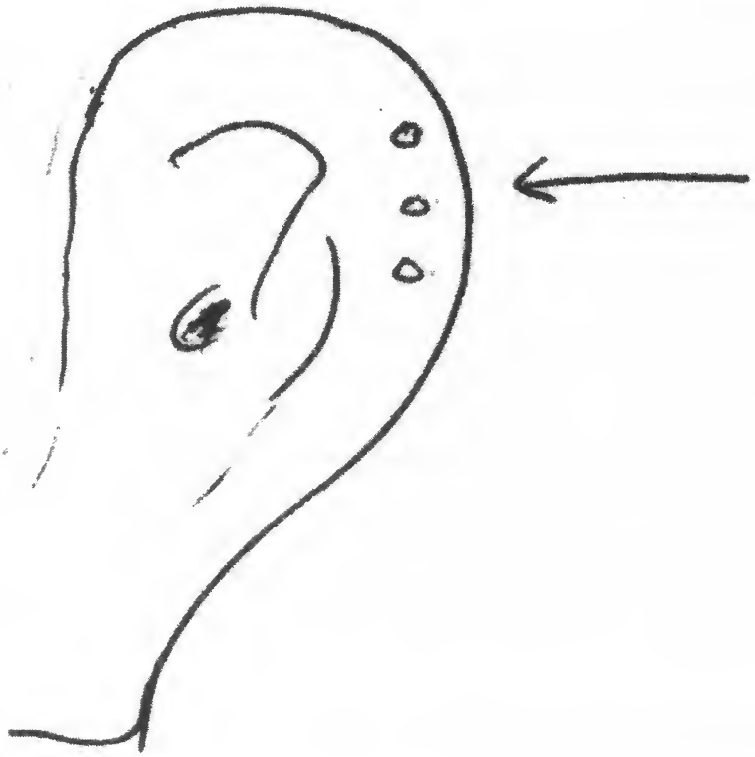

Figure 8-26 Sketch of birthmarks on William Tolmie's ear made during my interview with Sarah Tolmie on May 31, 1975.

location. After she had done this, I showed her my sketch of the birthmarks (made from her mother's description of them), and she said that I had located them as she remembered them. She had not seen them recently and seemed unsure about whether William had birthmarks on both ears or only on one. (Her mother had said there were three birthmarks on *each* ear.)

William seems never to have made any statements about a previous life. Sarah Tolmie thought there was something distinctive—perhaps "chieflike"—about William's demeanor, but she did not elaborate on this quality. William's grandmother, who had dreamed of her uncle Kah-kova, was so sure that William was Kah-kova reborn that she called him by this name. This overt identification of the boy with a noted chief must have influenced his behavior.

Sarah Tolmie was born in 1904. We can suppose, therefore, that her husband's great-uncle Kah-kova would have been born two generations before that, which puts his estimated birthdate back to about 1845.

On a visit to Prince Rupert in 1977 I telephoned William Tolmie, explained this research to him, and asked whether I could meet him. He politely but firmly declined to meet me or to discuss his case.

As the final case of this chapter I give another from the Tsimshian tribe of British Columbia, Canada. The subject's birthmarks, however, did not correspond to holes for earrings. Informants for the case said that they corresponded to the hole made by a labret, a decorative ornament of the lower lip worn by women of the tribes in northwestern North America until the early years of the 20th century. The birthmark is unique among those I have studied, and I have not even heard of another birthmark related to a labret.

THE CASE OF ANTOINETTE JACOBSSON

Summary of the Case and Its Investigation

Antoinette Jacobsson was born in Port Simpson, British Columbia, Canada, on May 11, 1935. Her parents were Jan Ruyter and his wife, Susanne. Antoinette was their first child; they subsequently had one son. Jan Ruyter was Dutch, and he had died by the time of my investigation of the case. Susanne Ruyter (née Potter) was a Tsimshian, although not of pure stock; she had some French ancestry.

When Antoinette was born, she was observed to have two small holes in her lower lip. These later closed up, leaving two small dimples (Figure 8-27). Antoinette's family interpreted the defects in her lip as residues of the hole (or holes) of a labret, a type of ornament commonly worn by women of all the tribal people of the northwest coastal area of North America until the end of the 19th century and early years of the 20th (Figure 8-28).

Antoinette's family believed that only the wives of chiefs wore labrets, but this is wrong; they were worn among the Tsimshians by all women except those

Figure 8-27 Birthmarks in the skin of Antoinette Jacobsson's chin, as they appeared in 1974, when she was 39 years old. The two small dimples in the middle line, about 1 centimeter inferior to the margin of the lower lip, were the healed residues of two holes that extended through the lip when Antoinette was born.

who were extremely poor or slaves.[35] The supposition that in a previous life Antoinette had been a Tsimshian woman of high rank was not supported by any other evidence. No one had a dream related to Antoinette's birth, and she herself never had any imaged memories of a previous life. No previous personality for her was identified or even conjectured. The case thus depends entirely on the occurrence of the defects in Antoinette's lip.

I learned of this case in 1973, when I was at the home (in Port Simpson) of Antoinette's maternal uncle, Thomas Potter. (His widowed sister, Susanne Ruyter [Antoinette's mother], was living with him then.) I had been told that Thomas Potter would be a valuable informant for cases among the Tsimshians, which he was; Antoinette's case was one of several about which he gave me information. He and his sister together told me about Antoinette's case when I first met them. Subsequently, I met them again in 1974 and 1975. During these later interviews, I learned more details about the holes in Antoinette's lip as they appeared when she was an infant, but there was otherwise nothing more to add to the case.

In 1973 I also met Antoinette Jacobsson herself. She was then 38 years old, married, and employed in Prince Rupert, where she was living. She said that she

[35]My source for this statement is Garfield (1950, p. 25). Additional information about labrets may be found in Dall (1881-1882) and Keddie (1981).

Figure 8-28 Haida woman, "Queen Johnny of Masset," wearing a labret, photographed at Haina in 1884. (Courtesy of the Royal British Columbia Museum, Victoria, B. C., Canada.)

had never had any memories of a previous life. I met her again, briefly, on subsequent visits to Prince Rupert in 1974 and 1975.

Antoinette's Birth Defect

When Antoinette was born, she had two small holes in her lower lip. The holes were close together, and one was smaller than the other. Both penetrated to the dental side of the lip, and, when Antoinette was about 2 weeks old, her maternal grandfather passed a toothpick from the outside through both holes to the dental side of the lip. The larger hole readily admitted the toothpick; the smaller one barely let it pass through to the inside of the lip. Subsequently, the holes closed up, but Susanne Ruyter did not remember how old Antoinette was when this clo-

sure occurred. After the closure of the holes, two small dimples in the outer aspect of the lower lip remained, and I photographed them in May 1974 (Figure 8-27).

At my first meeting with Antoinette's mother and uncle, they mentioned to me only one hole; we did not enter into much detail concerning the birth defect at the time, and I think the mention of one hole instead of two holes was an oversight on their part. In the subsequent interviews of 1974 and 1975, Susanne Ruyter was quite definite about the existence of two holes when Antoinette was born. This also was what Antoinette herself said in 1973, although she was then repeating what she had been told, not what she remembered at first hand.

Susanne Ruyter said that she herself had never seen a Tsimshian woman wearing a labret, although she must certainly have heard about them and perhaps seen photographs of them before Antoinette's birth.

Relevant Information about Labrets

Labrets existed in a variety of sizes and shapes. Works of ethnography about the natives of northwestern North America frequently reproduce sketches and photographs of women wearing labrets. The initial wound for the hole into which a labret was to be placed was made in childhood when a girl's ears would also be pierced for earrings. The hole for a labret would be kept open and gradually enlarged as the child grew up. The labret itself was held in place after insertion by a flange having a wider diameter than the stem that connected the flange with the part of the labret that remained external and was visible. Thus the opening would have to be stretched to admit the flange. The flange itself rubbed against the lower incisor teeth and abraded them. I have not found a suitable photograph of a Tsimshian woman wearing a labret; Figure 8-28 shows a Haida woman of the late 19th century wearing one.

In 1975 Susanne Ruyter told me that some Tsimshian women wore a small ring passed through two holes in the skin of the lip. These holes did not penetrate through the lip as the hole for a labret did. I have not been able to learn anything about this practice either from other informants or from published information on labrets. Superficial holes in the skin of the lip seem less likely than a labret to provide wounds that might become precursors of birth defects consisting of holes going entirely through the lip; the labret had a central plug that passed all the way through a single hole in the lip. It also would not be an obvious precursor of two separated holes in the lip of a person reincarnating after wearing a labret. However, the artificial opening in which a labret was inserted would have a natural tendency to close up, even in adulthood; because of the muscular forces involved, there might be greater tension in the lateral parts of the lip wall, and fields generated there might result in two holes in the lip of a baby whose embryo they influenced.[36]

[36]I owe this suggestion to Grant Keddie, Research Curator of the Royal British Columbia Museum, Victoria, British Columbia. He is an authority on labretifery, and I have already recommended a paper on the subject by him (Keddie, 1981). In correspondence with me he became interested in the relevance to the present case of the muscular tensions tending to close the hole made for a labret.

9

Nevi Corresponding to Wounds or Other Marks on Deceased Persons

INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapters I have focused attention on the wounds or other lesions to which a variety of birthmarks corresponded. In this chapter I change emphasis and focus attention instead on a particular type of birthmark: the nevus. Nevi have various forms and types: hyperpigmented macules, elevated hyperpigmented nevi (often called moles), various kinds of vascular nevi (nevus flammeus), and others. I have already presented examples of each of these types. For example, U Tinn Sein and Susan Wilson had hyperpigmented macules; Sunita Khandelwal, Nirankar Bhatnagar, and Maung Nyunt Win had hyperpigmented nevi; and Sunita Singh and Ma Chit Chit Than had types of nevus flammeus. In the present chapter I add another 14 examples of nevi of various types. (This will not exhaust cases of this type in our collection, but it seems best to place some additional cases in later chapters.)

By considering together many cases with nevi, I hope to demonstrate two important points. First, the same type of birthmark (for example, a hairy hyperpigmented nevus) may correspond to different types of wounds on a deceased person, such as a burn or a punctured sebaceous cyst. Second, different types of birthmarks (for example, a nevus flammeus and a hairy hyperpigmented nevus) may correspond to the same type of wound, such as a burn. These facts tell us that, if we favor reincarnation as the best interpretation for these cases, we must acknowledge that the skin tissues of the subject—more exactly, the cells of the embryo or

fetus that will become his or her skin—contribute as much to the development of the birthmark as does the psychic influence that reincarnation supposes.

This conclusion should surprise no one. We know that people vary widely in the reactions of their skins to burns and other injuries; for example, the indurated hypertrophic scars known as keloids occur much more often among Negroes than among Caucasian people (Cosman et al., 1961; Hazen, 1914; Nikolowski, 1961; Rassner, 1978). Cosman et al. found the incidence of keloids among Negroes more than 3 times that among Caucasians, and Hazen found the incidence 14 times greater among Negroes than among Caucasians. On the other hand, psoriasis occurs comparatively rarely among Negroes. Hazen observed it to occur 10 times more frequently among Caucasians than among Negroes, and Fox (1908) found it 5 times more frequent among Caucasians than among Negroes. A similar disparity occurs in sensitivity to the toxin of *rhus toxicodendron* (poison ivy); Fox (1908) found reactions to this toxin about 3 times as frequent among Caucasians as among Negroes. I return to this topic later when I consider why some subjects of these cases have had no birthmarks whatever, although these might otherwise have been expected. Here I will only mention that perhaps the skin of some persons completely fails to react to a psychic influence from a reincarnating personality.

Among the 14 cases described in this chapter, the birthmarks on 5 of the subjects were no larger than the ordinary ones "that everyone has." The birthmarks on the other 9 subjects, however, were appreciably larger than such ordinary birthmarks.

The birthmarks on the last six subjects reported in this chapter corresponded to similar birthmarks on the previous personality. In all but the last of these cases subject and previous personality belonged to the same family, and because hyperpigmented macules and other types of nevi are sometimes inherited, we shall have to consider whether a genetic factor can adequately account for the birthmarks in these cases.

THE CASE OF IJEOMA NWANGWU

Ijeoma Nwangwu was born in Mgbowo, Anambra State, Nigeria, in 1930. Her parents were Nwigbudu Orji and his wife, Onyebuchi Azinwoke. They were Igbos. They later had three other daughters, and I think that Ijeoma was their oldest daughter.

Onyebuchi Azinwoke gave me nearly all the information that I obtained for this case. I met her in June 1984 (with Dr. Nicholas McClean-Rice) at her village of Azunkwo, which is near Ndeaboh. (Mgbowo is also in this general area.) Onyebuchi could not state her age, which I then estimated at about 70, although I later decided that she may have been older. Before we met her, she had been described to us as "mental," which seemed to be a warning that her testimony might be of little value. However, she answered questions in a completely straightforward way, and the information she furnished seemed reliable. She could

not give dates for events that she otherwise seemed to remember clearly enough, but we almost expect this in many villagers of Asia and Africa.

Onyebuchi said that when Ijeoma was born, she had a birthmark on her abdomen (Figure 9-1), and, noticing this, Onyebuchi decided to consult an oracle about the cause of the birthmark (and presumably about the identity of the previous personality of Ijeoma). The oracle said that Ijeoma was the reincarnation of Onyebuchi's younger sister, Ugoihonwoke, who had died some time before Ijeoma's birth. I did not learn and could not even guess how much younger Ugoihonwoke was than Onyebuchi.

Ugoihonwoke had had a single large ulcer on her abdomen at the site of Ijeoma's birthmark. Onyebuchi said that the ulcer was due to yaws, the disease from which Ugoihonwoke died. Onyebuchi said that she herself was about 14 or 15 years old when her sister died.

Onyebuchi said that Ijeoma had never openly identified herself with Ugoihonwoke or otherwise spoken about a previous life. She said that her (Onyebuchi's) other children did not have birthmarks like Ijeoma's. She added that she thought Ijeoma resembled Ugoihonwoke in being cheerful, clever, and

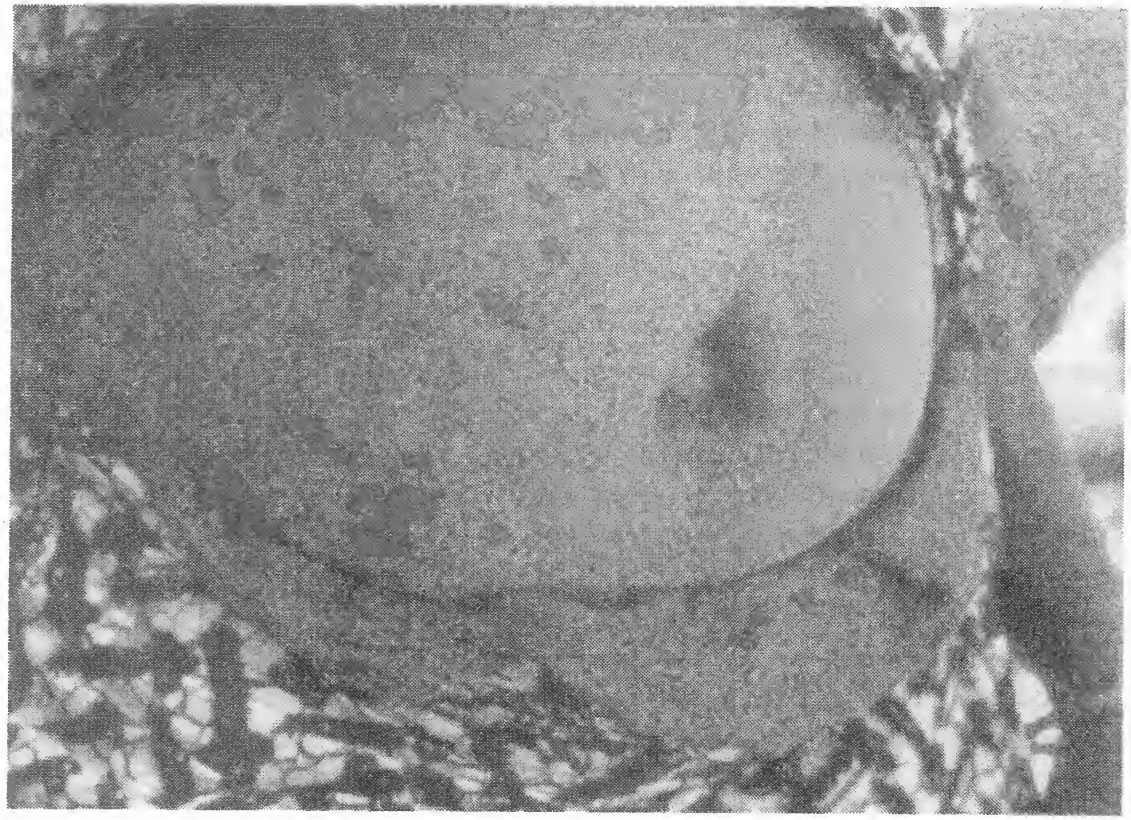

Figure 9-1 Birthmark on Ijeoma Nwangwu as it appeared in June 1984, when she was about 54 years old. The birthmark was a large oval area of diminished pigmentation on the right middle abdomen. It measured about 6 centimeters by 4 centimeters.

plump. She was not aware of anyone else who had been identified as a reincarnation of Ugoihonwoke.[1]

We also met Ijeoma (on the same day we met her mother) and found her indeed plump and cheerful. I presume she was also clever because, although illiterate, she was earning money as a long-distance trader.

Ijeoma was then in her middle 50s and, somewhat to my surprise, said that she still had some memories of the previous life. In particular, she said she could still remember the prolonged suffering from the disease that killed her in the previous life and that had, she believed, caused her birthmark. She also recalled that she had been married and had children. Unfortunately, I did not ask Onyebuchi about whether Ugoihonwoke had been married and had had children at the time of her death. This would seem unlikely if Onyebuchi herself had only been 14 or 15 years old, but Onyebuchi may have been older than this when Ugoihonwoke died; and Ugoihonwoke might have married very young.

Ijeoma believed that her three younger sisters had birthmarks similar to hers and at the same site as hers, but of different sizes. She thought that these sisters were also regarded as being Ugoihonwoke reincarnated.

Another informant, Ogbonnaya Azi (a distant relative of the family), said that he had seen the birthmarks on these sisters, but he remembered them as being on the left side of the abdomen (not the right); and as he also gave testimony at variance with Onyebuchi's on the critical matter of the correct previous personality in Ijeoma's case, I have given his statements little weight. Moreover, Onyebuchi said definitely that no other of her children had a birthmark like Ijeoma's. (The sisters were all in northern Nigeria at the time of our study of this case, and so we could not examine them.)

Comment

Onyebuchi's statement that her sister died of yaws does not make this the correct diagnosis, although it may be. It is not uncommon for villagers to label diseases by words with which they are familiar but which are, for the disease in question, wrong. Yaws, a spirochetal infection, is endemic in Nigeria and certainly causes ulcers; but so do other diseases, leprosy being only one. Fatal yaws would ordinarily be associated with more than one ulcer, unless some other infection or other illness supervened after the primary lesion or "mother yaw" had developed (Mackie, Hunter, and Worth, 1954).

For present purposes the important question is whether Ijeoma's birthmark was at the same site as an ulcer on Ugoihonwoke. On this point Onyebuchi seemed quite definite, and as we interviewed her without Ijeoma, she did not have

[1]I asked the question that elicited this information because many Igbo people believe that a person may reincarnate in more than one body living at the same time, perhaps even in several bodies (Stevenson, 1985).

an opportunity to have her memory refreshed (or perhaps distorted) by anything her daughter might have said.

It is of some importance to decide whether Ijeoma's sisters did in fact have birthmarks at the same site as hers. It is possible that they had small birthmarks in the same general area as Ijeoma's birthmark; if so, their presence could have led to some speculation about "soul-splitting" and multiple reincarnations. However, Ijeoma's birthmark is large and prominent, and if her younger sisters had had birthmarks of anything like the same size, I think their mother would have remembered them. I conclude, therefore, that if Ijeoma's sisters had any birthmarks at all, they were much smaller than hers.

Ijeoma's Birthmark

Figure 9-1 shows Ijeoma's birthmark, which consisted of a large oval area of diminished pigmentation measuring about 6 centimeters by 4 centimeters.[2]

Perhaps I should not subsume this birthmark under nevi. Most nevi have increased pigmentation, normal pigmentation, or increased red coloration (nevus flammeus).

THE CASE OF MAUNG MHAT TIN

Summary of the Case and Its Investigation

Maung Mhat Tin was born on February 27, 1945, in Nga-Zun, Upper Burma. His parents were U Chit Tee and Daw Ohn Yin. Maung Mhat Tin was their third son. Three other sons and one daughter were subsequently born in the family. U Chit Tee was a cultivator.

Maung Mhat Tin was born with birthmarks on his left chest and abdomen (Figure 9-2).

When Maung Mhat Tin was about 2½ years old, and not yet able to speak clearly, he said: "I want to return to my village. My wife is Ma Nge—Ma Nge." He was asked: "Is this not your village? Where is your village?" To this he replied: "No, this is not my village. My village is Thangone." He was then asked: "Who are you?" and he replied: "I am Aung Su from Thangone."

Maung Aung Su was a cultivator of Thangone village who had killed a Japanese soldier in 1944. For this the Japanese Army had executed him by shooting.

Maung Aung Su's family learned of Maung Mhat Tin's statements about the life of Maung Aung Su and wanted to visit him at Nga-Zun, but did not know his

[2]Hypopigmentation of the birthmark(s) occurred in at least 25 cases. Appendix C includes this detail in the list of cases given there. This variation has considerable importance, and I discuss it further in Chapter 22 on disorders of pigmentation related to previous lives.

address. However, when Maung Mhat Tin was about 4 years old, Maung Aung Su's wife, Daw Nge, was in Nga-Zun on business, and she met Maung Mhat Tin by chance at that time. (I shall describe this meeting later.) Other members of Maung Aung Su's family then began to visit Maung Mhat Tin.

I first learned of the case in 1972. U Win Maung (whose son was then working in Nga-Zun) had heard about it from informants there. In September 1972, U Win Maung interviewed Maung Mhat Tin and his older cousin U Thein Maung. He also recorded a long statement from Daw Nge, Maung Aung Su's widow. In November 1972, I went myself to Nga-Zun (with U Win Maung), and we interviewed Maung Mhat Tin together. I did not meet any other informants for the case in that year.

In March 1977, U Win Maung and I returned to Nga-Zun, where we again talked with Maung Mhat Tin. On this visit we also interviewed U Thein Maung again (briefly) and three other older residents of Nga-Zun, who had been eyewitnesses of Maung Aung Su's execution by the Japanese Army. Unfortunately, Maung Mhat Tin's parents were away from Nga-Zun, and I could not meet them.

In December 1980, U Win Maung and I were again in Nga-Zun. Once again his parents were away from Nga-Zun. So also were his two older brothers who, in the absence of his parents, would have been informants about Maung Mhat Tin's childhood as well, perhaps, as about the congenitality of his birthmarks. However, we met Maung Mhat Tin again, and we also had another interview with his cousin, U Thein Maung. In addition, we met for the first time and interviewed Daw Aye Myint, one of Maung Aung Su's older sisters.

Persons Interviewed during the Investigation

In Nga-Zun we interviewed the following persons:

Maung Mhat Tin
U Thein Maung, Maung Mhat Tin's cousin
U Ba Gyar, villager of Nga-Zun
U Tin Hla, villager of Nga-Zun
Daw Khin Khin, U Tin Hla's wife
Daw Aye Myint, Maung Aung Su's older sister

In addition to our interviews, I have drawn for this report on U Win Maung's notes of the interviews he had in September 1972 with Maung Mhat Tin, U Thein Maung, and Daw Nge (Maung Aung Su's wife). U Win Maung interviewed Daw Nge in Thangone.

Relevant Facts of Geography and Other Background Information

Nga-Zun is a small town on the Irrawaddy River about 45 kilometers west of Mandalay. Thangone is a village about 8 kilometers from Nga-Zun.

The families in this case were not related. According to Maung Mhat Tin, they were not even acquainted before the case developed. However, although Maung

Aung Su lived in Thangone, the Japanese Army executed him in Nga-Zun. We should assume, therefore, that all of the inhabitants of Nga-Zun knew the circumstances of Maung Aung Su's death and probably also all the other important facts of his life. I think it unlikely that Maung Mhat Tin made any verifiable statement about the previous life that contained information of which his parents were ignorant.

The Death of Maung Aung Su

Maung Aung Su was the son of U Lu Doke and Daw Khant. He was a cultivator who lived in the village of Thangone with his wife, Daw Nge, and their children.

Sometime during the summer of 1944, the Japanese Army occupying the area of Nga-Zun commandeered the services of the villagers who owned bullock-carts to transport bags of rice from the area of Nga-Zun to another town where they needed the rice. The caravan of bullock-carts that they organized could only move at night because it was vulnerable during the day to attacks by the (British) Royal Air Force. Some Japanese soldiers accompanied the caravan. In the villages where the caravan stopped, the villagers pilfered rice from the bags. At first the Japanese were satisfied with a count of the bags being transported, but then they began to realize that, although the number of bags remained constant, the individual bags had less rice than they should have had. The Japanese soldiers questioned the bullock-cart drivers, received answers that did not satisfy them, and started slapping the drivers. This infuriated Maung Aung Su, and he killed the Japanese soldier who was riding on his bullock-cart.

Maung Aung Su managed to evade the other Japanese soldiers and returned to Thangone. When the Japanese found that one of their men was missing, they quickly inferred who had killed him and came up to Thangone to hunt for Maung Aung Su. He was sitting inside his parents' house when the Japanese soldiers went into his house and started to beat his wife, Daw Nge. Maung Aung Su then came out of his parents' house and surrendered to the Japanese. Daw Nge, talking to U Win Maung many years later, in 1972, remembered that Maung Aung Su said to the Japanese soldiers: "Don't beat her. Arrest me only. I killed the soldier." Then he told his family: "I killed that Japanese. Don't worry about me. I am just unlucky. I could have fled elsewhere. I am quite prepared to give up my life, or the whole village would be massacred. I am quite content that you are all spared."

The Japanese took Maung Aung Su to Nga-Zun, where they had their regional headquarters. Then they summoned the inhabitants of the town to attend his execution, which took place at the town's cemetery. They tied Maung Aung Su to a tamarind tree and wanted to blindfold him. U Ba Gyar, who was present at the execution, remembered hearing Maung Aung Su say: "Do not blindfold me. If you want to shoot, shoot." Daw Nge also attended the execution and recalled that her husband had refused to be blindfolded. When the firing squad was ready, an officer gave the command to fire. A few shots rang out, and Maung Aung Su's body slumped forward.

In addition to U Ba Gyar and Daw Nge (both of whom were young adults), U Tin Hla and Daw Khin Khin (both of whom were young children, respectively

aged about 7 and 5 at the time) attended Maung Aung Su's execution. None of the witnesses later remembered where the Japanese bullets had wounded Maung Aung Su.

I said above that Maung Aung Su died in the summer of 1944. U Ba Gyar thought the events just described occurred "toward the end of the Japanese occupation [of Burma, that is, in] 1944-1945." Daw Nge and U Thein Maung estimated that June 1944 was the most likely month of Maung Aung Su's execution.

Statements and a Recognition Made by Maung Mhat Tin

Maung Mhat Tin's Statements When He Was a Young Child. I have already described Maung Mhat Tin's statements to members of his family when he was between 2 and 3 years old. At a later age, he also spoke about his memories of the previous life to Maung Aung Su's wife, Daw Nge. I shall next cite, with slight editing for greater readability, part of the statement Daw Nge made to U Win Maung in September 1972:

> We heard the news that Aung Su was reborn again as a boy somewhere in Nga-Zun, but we did not know his address. However, one day while I was going to Myin-ze [near Nga-Zun] to sell jaggery [a type of candy made from date palm juice], I passed through Nga-Zun and happened to stop at a house for a short rest. A child of about 4 saw me and started crying. In order to mollify him I gave him some sweets. But he did not stop crying. He kept on saying that he wanted to go to Thangone. I told him: "Little boy, you are too young to come with me to Thangone. Don't come with me yet." I learned from his parents that the child was the rebirth of Aung Su.
>
> The next time I went that way, a few months afterward, I met him again and teased him, saying: "You are telling me fibs. You are not Aung Su." He replied: "No. I am not lying. I remember that the Thangone Pagoda faces east." (This is so.) I asked: "Are you going to live in Thangone?" He replied: "No. I do not wish to live in Thangone, but I know my grandmother, Daw Khant.[3] I also know Daw Aye Myint [Maung Aung Su's older sister]."

From Daw Nge's statement it appears that Maung Mhat Tin recognized her, at least as someone from Thangone; but he did not definitely recognize her as Maung Aung Su's wife, and Daw Nge did not claim that he had.

Maung Mhat Tin's Recognition of Daw Aye Myint. Daw Aye Myint described (in 1980) her recognition by Maung Mhat Tin when he was between 3 and 4 years old. Two of her (and Maung Aung Su's) sisters had met Maung Mhat Tin and learned about his claim to be Maung Aung Su reborn. They returned home and brought Daw Aye Myint, who was the oldest sister of the family, to meet the little boy. They showed Daw Aye Myint to him and asked him who she

[3]This detail is wrong. Daw Khant was Maung Aung Su's mother, not his grandmother.

was. He said: "I know. She is my sister." They asked him to give her name and he said: "Mama Myint." (*Mama* means sister.) He said that he had been shot.

Daw Aye Myint asked Maung Mhat Tin a few questions, such as why his lip was black. He said that he had bitten his lips before he died. He said that the Japanese had killed him.

Daw Nge (Maung Aung Su's widow) had mentioned to U Win Maung in 1972 several statements that she said Maung Mhat Tin had made to Daw Aye Myint (her sister-in-law) when he met her for the first time. However, Daw Aye Myint had evidently forgotten these additional statements by 1980; or, possibly, Daw Nge, as a secondhand informant for them, had wrongly said she learned about them from Daw Aye Myint.

Maung Mhat Tin's Statements in 1972 about the Death of Maung Aung Su. In 1972 Maung Mhat Tin said that when he was a child, his parents had tried to suppress him from talking about the previous life. They had done this by scolding him. He said his memories had become weaker as a result. Be that as it may, he still talked as if he clearly remembered many details of events that occurred during the last few days of Maung Aung Su's life. Since by 1972 he had had many meetings with Maung Aung Su's family, at which they would certainly have discussed Maung Aung Su's life, I cannot now tell—Maung Mhat Tin probably could not tell himself—to what extent he drew on original imaged memories and to what extent on what he had learned normally from adults who remembered Maung Aung Su. However, his statements contained some details that were not verified and that would indeed have been known only to Maung Aung Su, if they are correct. It seems worth recording here Maung Mhat Tin's rather circumstantial account of the events of the previous life that he still remembered. In the following paragraphs, therefore, I give a summary of what Maung Mhat Tin told U Win Maung and me that he remembered.

The Japanese Army commanded the villagers who owned bullock-carts to transport bags of rice from Kala village (near Nga-Zun) to Ava (near Mandalay). The distance was about 32 kilometers. There were about 50 bullock-carts in the convoy, and as they moved along, each one was separated from its neighbor by about 20 meters. They traveled at night. On each cart, there was a Japanese soldier to guard the consignment. The soldier on his (Maung Aung Su's) cart was overbearing and continually found fault with him. When he drove fast, the soldier said he was deliberately speeding on a bumpy road in order to make him (the soldier) uncomfortable; and when he went slowly, the soldier said he was lingering. Annoyed beyond endurance, he (Maung Aung Su) lost his temper, pulled out a large knife of the type that Burmese peasants usually have in their carts, and killed the soldier with one stroke. He pushed the soldier's body off the cart and continued driving his bullock-cart in the caravan. It was night and no one saw him kill the soldier. When they reached their destination, the drivers unloaded their rice bags and were told they could go home. When the Japanese paraded their men, they discovered that one soldier was missing. In the meantime, he (Maung Aung Su) had slipped away to Thangone. The Japanese followed him there. When they threatened to burn down the entire village if he continued to evade them, he surrendered.

The Japanese tied him to a tamarind tree in the Loketaingone Cemetery in the western part of Nga-Zun. All the inhabitants of the town were compelled to witness the execution. He refused to be blindfolded. He wanted to take revenge on the Japanese, so he mentally prayed that he would be born again as a human being before the Japanese were driven out of the country.[4] He bit his lips (in order not to show fear) just before he was shot.

There were three soldiers in the Japanese firing squad. They were about 30 meters away. Their first two shots did not hit him. Then he was hit in the abdomen. After the first bullet hit him, another soldier fired again and hit him in the chest. He did not die until this bullet hit him.

Maung Mhat Tin said that he spent 7 days in a discarnate state. He recalled passing this period on a yon tree. At the end of a week, two persons (whose dress he could not later remember) told him: "You are now permitted to fulfill your desire to be born as a human being again." He remembered nothing after that until he regained consciousness, so to speak, as the young child, Maung Mhat Tin.

Maung Mhat Tin's Other Memories of the Previous Life. In 1972 I asked Maung Mhat Tin what he could remember of events prior to those immediately preceding Maung Aung Su's death. He said that he could recall the religious ceremony at which Maung Aung Su's two sons were initiated as novices in a temple. (In this statement Maung Mhat Tin said he had two sons and two daughters, contrary to his telling Daw Aye Myint that he had two daughters and one son; I do not know how many children Maung Aung Su did have.) Maung Mhat Tin could still recall feeding the monks and the pleasure he had on this occasion. He said that this ceremony occurred about 2 months before Maung Aung Su died. He could remember no earlier event in the life of Maung Aung Su, such as his wedding day.

Maung Mhat Tin's Behavior Related to the Previous Life

I have already mentioned that Maung Mhat Tin wished to go to Thangone when he was a young child. His parents did not want him to go there, and his older cousin, U Thein Maung, thought that he never had gone to Thangone. Maung Mhat Tin said, however, that he had gone there covertly with some uncles. He went there about three times up to the age of 7. He had not returned since that time. He had, however, maintained contact with Daw Aye Myint, who had moved from Thangone to Nga-Zun. Until he married, he visited her often, but later less frequently. They were still meeting occasionally in 1980.

Maung Mhat Tin said that he had been resentful toward Japanese people when he was a child up to the age of about 12. Then he gradually lost this antagonism, and at the time we knew him he said that he had left the past behind and was concerned only with his present life.

[4]Buddhists believe that human beings may be reborn as nonhuman animals. Maung Aung Su wished to be reborn as a human so that he could take revenge on the Japanese. In fact, by the time Maung Mhat Tin was born in February 1945 the British Army had begun its successful attack on the Japanese Army, which resulted in the reconquest of Burma by May 1945. (See Appendix B.)

The Attitudes of the Adults Concerned toward Maung Mhat Tin's Memories

Unfortunately, U Win Maung and I never met Maung Mhat Tin's parents. As I mentioned, he said that they scolded him when, as a child, he had spoken about the previous life. He said that they were ashamed of his talk about the life of Maung Aung Su. They seemed to think that he might be embellishing his account and including details that were untrue. However, we learned of no evidence that Maung Mhat Tin had distorted his account of the previous life, although he made at least one mistake.

The members of Maung Aung Su's family with whom we talked accepted his claim to be Maung Aung Su reborn. Maung Aung Su's sister, Daw Aye Myint, said this explicitly; and his widow, Daw Nge, did so implicitly during her detailed statement to U Win Maung in 1972.

Maung Mhat Tin's Birthmarks

Figure 9-2 shows Maung Mhat Tin's birthmarks. The larger one is located about 3 centimeters below his left nipple and slightly lateral to it. The other is in the midline about halfway between the umbilicus and the xiphoid process. Both are approximately circular in shape. The birthmarks are neither elevated nor depressed in relation to the surrounding skin. They consist only of increased pigmentation compared with the skin of the surrounding areas. (Figure 9-2 also shows, toward the left side of Maung Mhat Tin's abdomen, the scar of a furuncle. It is slightly depressed, and its pigmentation is little different from that of the surrounding skin; this mark is not related to the previous life.)

As mentioned, we did not meet Maung Mhat Tin's parents, and we have only his statement for the congenitality of the marks on his abdomen and chest that I have called birthmarks. However, marks of the type shown in Figure 9-2 do not resemble the scars of furuncles, insect bites, abrasions, or cuts. The scar of a furuncle that can be seen in Figure 9-2 has an appearance distinctly different from that of the marks with which Maung Mhat Tin says he was born and that, according to him, derived from the wounds on Maung Aung Su when he was executed.

Figure 9-3 is of a sketch that I made, and I hope that it will assist readers to locate the pertinent birthmarks, as well as the scar of the furuncle, which has a different appearance from that of the birthmarks. Figure 9-4 shows a roundish bullet wound of entry on a person killed in Virginia.

We were unable to find a witness of Maung Aung Su's execution who had noticed (and remembered) where he was wounded. Perhaps the witnesses averted their gaze as the firing squad shot. U Tin Hla said that "his body was covered with blood. I could not tell where he was hit." Some readers may therefore think that I am not justified in including this case among those for which I have verified the correspondence between the subject's birthmark and the concerned previous personality's wound. I feel entitled to do this, however, for the following reasons. Four different eyewitnesses told me Maung Aung Su was executed by a firing squad of the Japanese Army; and firing squads always—so far as I know—aim at the condemned person's heart.

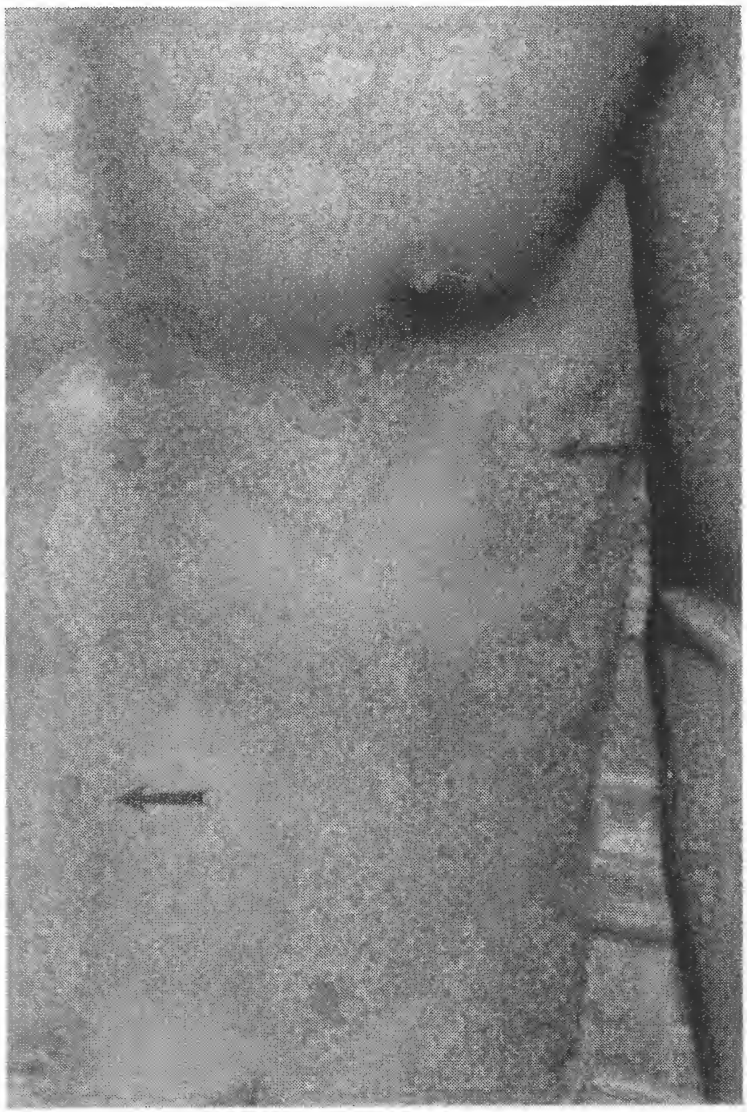

Figure 9-2 Birthmarks on Maung Mhat Tin as they appeared in March 1977, when he was 32 years old. The two birthmarks were hyperpigmented bluish macules, both roundish in shape. The larger of the two, located inferior and slightly lateral to the left nipple, was about 2.5 centimeters in diameter. The smaller one was in the midline about halfway between the xiphoid process and the umbilicus. It was 5-6 millimeters in diameter.
The scar of a furuncle, which was smaller and slightly depressed below the surrounding skin, can be seen in the left upper quadrant of the abdomen just below the costal margin and at about the same level as the smaller birthmark.
A reddish brown discoloration of the skin in the midline derived from pressing and scraping the skin of the chest against the trunks of palm trees that Maung Mhat Tin had climbed.

Maung Mhat Tin's lower lip was large to the point of being malformed. He related this to Maung Aung Su's having bitten his lip just before being shot so that he would not show fear when the Japanese firing squad was preparing to shoot him. I include photographs of his enlarged lip and a further discussion of this feature in Chapter 24, where I describe facial forms that may derive from previous lives.

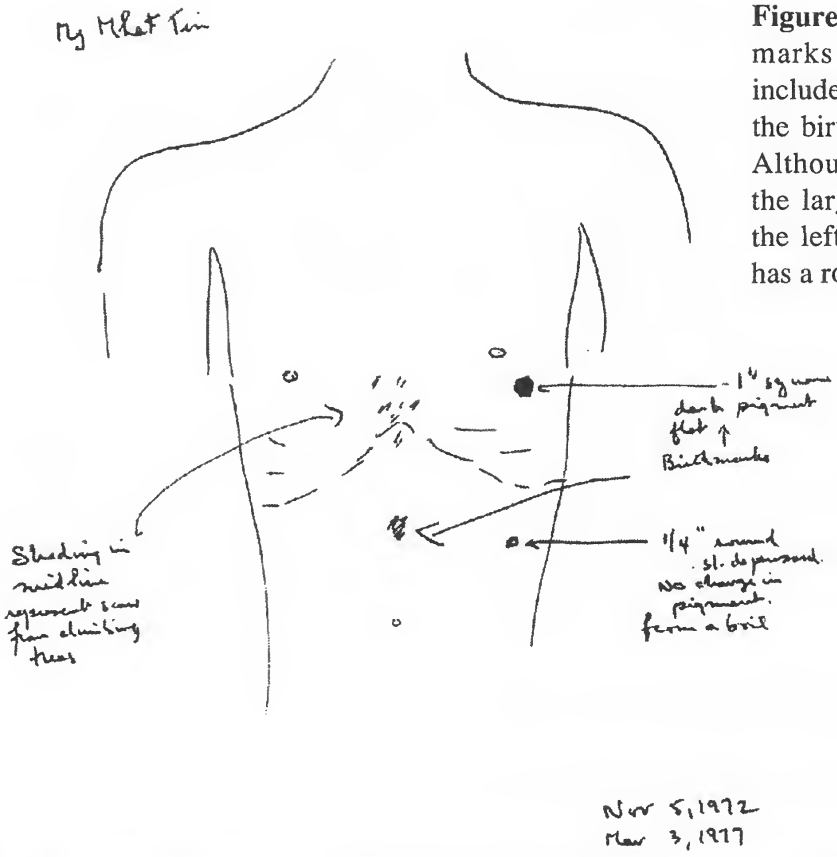

Figure 9-3 Sketch of birthmarks on Maung Mhat Tin included as an aid in locating the birthmarks in Figure 9-2. Although the note describes the larger birthmark beneath the left nipple as "square," it has a roundish shape.

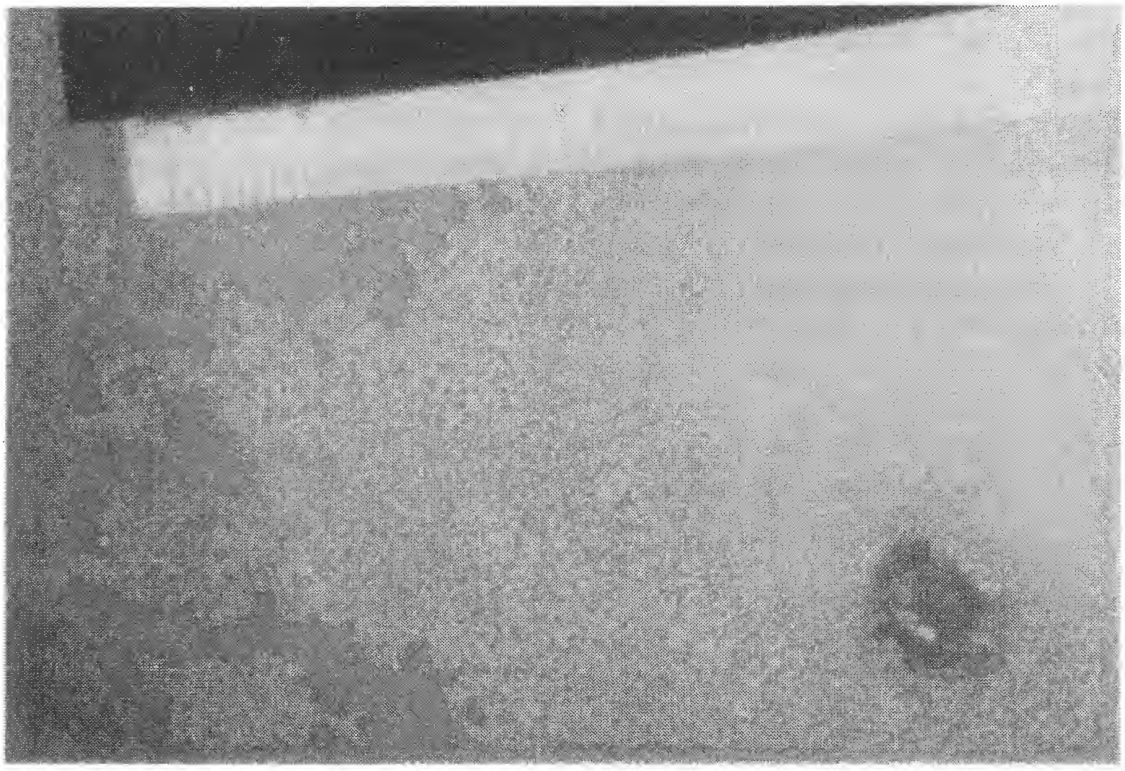

Figure 9-4 Roundish bullet wound of entry on left chest of a person murdered in Virginia. (Courtesy of Dr. David Wiecking.)

Comment

Maung Mhat Tin's statements do not seem to have contained anything that was both verifiable and outside the normal knowledge of persons in his community. He identified himself with Maung Aung Su, however, when he was a young child, and he was still doing it when U Win Maung and I met him many years later. He had imaged memories from the life of Maung Aung Su, appropriate corresponding behavior, and birthmarks probably corresponding to Maung Aung Su's fatal wounds.

Maung Mhat Tin's Later Development

When we last met Maung Mhat Tin, in 1980, he was 35 years old. He said that he had forgotten most of his memories of the previous life and only occasionally thought about it. He could still remember how Maung Aung Su had killed the Japanese soldier and how he had been subsequently shot by the Japanese.

THE CASE OF MA KHIN HSANN OO

Summary of the Case and Its Investigation

Ma Khin Hsann Oo was born in Ywathit village in the Tatkon Township of Upper Burma on October 11, 1974. Her parents were U Hla Thoung and Daw Khin Ma, and she was the older of their two daughters; they had no sons. U Hla Thoung was a cultivator.

Immediately at Ma Khin Hsann Oo's birth her body was found to have extensive and numerous areas of her skin covered by large hyperpigmented nevi. Figure 9-5 shows the appearance of exposed parts of her body when she was between 6 and 7 months old, in April 1975.

No one connected with Ma Khin Hsann Oo's family had a dream that might have indicated a previous personality for her, and when she was born, her parents seem not to have conjectured about who she might have been in a previous life. Ma Khin Hsann Oo began speaking clearly when she was about 1½ years old and at about the same time began referring to a previous life. However, she seems not to have stated the name in the previous life until she was about 3 years old.

She then said that she was Ahmar Yee and that she had died when a car overturned and she was burned in flames. She said: "Shik-koe's car overturned." She seems not to have described how this accident happened or to have made other statements about the previous life that her mother later remembered.

However, the few statements that she did make made her family think that she must be referring to the life and death of a young woman called Ma Ahmar Yee, who had died of burns when a truck in which she had been riding overturned and afterward caught fire. (An Indian Moslem called Shik-koe owned the truck.) This accident, which cost 10 lives, occurred near the city of Meiktila on March 24, 1974.

Figure 9-5 Birthmarks on Ma Khin Hsann Oo as they appeared in April 1975, when she was between 6 and 7 months old.

U Win Maung learned about this case from an informant in Okshitgone village, which is also in Tatkon Township. He met Ma Khin Hsann Oo and her parents on May 18 and 19, 1981. Daw Khin Ma was the principal informant for what Ma Khin Hsann Oo had said about the previous life; U Hla Thoung added no additional information, although he did provide an exact date for his daughter's birth. U Win Maung also interviewed Ma Ahmar Yee's mother, Daw Hmwe. He met her at her home in the town of Tatkon on May 19, 1981.

Subsequently, in 1983, U Win Maung succeeded in tracing and interviewing two residents of Meiktila who had been witnesses of the truck accident in which Ma Ahmar Yee had died, and he also interviewed U Mya Maung, one of the four passengers in the truck who had survived the accident.

In March 1984, I went to Ywathit village with U Win Maung, U Nu, and Daw Hnin Aye. We talked with Daw Khin Ma about details of the case. I examined Ma Khin Hsann Oo's nevi and photographed some of them.

In 1986 Daw Hnin Aye went to Tatkon and also to Ywathit village. She missed meeting Ma Khin Hsann Oo's parents, but was able to meet Ma Khin Hsann Oo herself and her maternal grandmother, Daw Khin Pu. She also interviewed Daw Hmwe and an old friend of Ma Ahmar Yee, Ma Ngwe Myaing.

Persons Interviewed during the Investigation

In Ywathit village, Tatkon Township, we interviewed:

U Hla Thoung, Ma Khin Hsann Oo's father (interviewed only by U Win Maung)

Daw Khin Ma, Ma Khin Hsann Oo's mother (interviewed by U Win Maung and myself)

Daw Khin Pu, Daw Khin Ma's mother (interviewed only by Daw Hnin Aye)

In Meiktila we interviewed:

Daw Khin Toke, eyewitness of accident in which Ma Ahmar Yee died (interviewed only by U Win Maung)

Daw Ma Ma Gyi, informant about the accident in which Ma Ahmar Yee died (interviewed only by U Win Maung)

In Tatkon we interviewed:

U Mya Maung, passenger on the truck on which Ma Ahmar Yee had been traveling when it overturned and caught fire (interviewed only by U Win Maung)

Daw Hmwe, Ma Ahmar Yee's mother (interviewed by U Win Maung and Daw Hnin Aye)

Ma Ngwe Myaing, friend of Ma Ahmar Yee (interviewed only by Daw Hnin Aye)

The foregoing list shows that I contributed little directly to the interviewing. I guided Daw Hnin Aye's interviewing through correspondence.

Relevant Facts of Geography and Possibilities for Normal Means of Communication between the Two Families

The village of Ywathit, where Ma Khin Hsann Oo was born and lived, is 1.5 kilometers east of Tatkon, where Ma Ahmar Yee had lived. The accident in which Ma Ahmar Yee died occurred near the village of Kyidaungone, just north of Meiktila, which is nearly 100 kilometers north and slightly west of Tatkon.

One informant told us that the families concerned in the case were remotely related, but could not describe the relationship simply. At the time of our interview with

Daw Khin Ma in 1984, she said that the families were *not* related. However, they were certainly well acquainted. Ma Ahmar Yee's mother, Daw Hmwe, had a close friendship with Daw Khin Ma's mother, Daw Khin Pu. In addition, U Hla Thoung and his older brother, Ko Sein Maung, had been schoolmates of Ma Ahmar Yee and had often stopped at her house as they walked together back to their homes in Ywathit village.

The Life and Death of Ma Ahmar Yee

Ma Ahmar Yee was born in Ywathit village in about 1944. Her parents were U Hgnet Yoe and Daw Hmwe, and she was the second of their five children. Ma Ahmar Yee attended school up to the ninth grade. She never married, but worked as a trader in cloth. At the end of her life she was living in Tatkon with her mother. (I think her father had died; he had certainly died by the time of our study of the case.)

Daw Hmwe considered Ma Ahmar Yee distinctive in several qualities: She was unusually pious, extremely clean, and fond of cosmetics.

On the evening of March 23, 1974, Ma Ahmar Yee traveled as a passenger on a truck going north from Tatkon to Mandalay. The truck was principally carrying heavy boxes containing cakes of unrefined sugar. The boxes were placed on the floorboards of the truck and a tarpaulin was laid over them. The back of the truck had no roof, but did have some iron framework. Twelve cloth merchants who wanted to purchase cloth in Mandalay for their shops were traveling as hitchhikers. They were all sitting or sleeping on the tarpaulin. At about 2:00 a.m. of the following morning (March 24, 1974) the truck was passing the village of Kyidaungone, just north of Meiktila, when one of the rear wheels came off. The driver panicked and lost control of the truck, which overturned. Most of the passengers found themselves then pinned under the heavy boxes of sugar or under the truck. Some of them seem to have been crushed to death. The survivors began to call for help, and villagers came to the scene with kerosene torches and lamps. However, the gasoline tank of the truck had been broken, and the gasoline flowed out. Some of the wounded and struggling passengers shouted to the villagers to keep their flaming torches away, but this warning came too late. The gasoline ignited, and soon the whole truck was ablaze. A fire brigade eventually arrived, but too late to be effective. U Mya Maung (one of U Win Maung's informants), who had been riding with the other passengers, was thrown clear of the truck at the moment of the accident, and he survived. One other passenger survived, and so did the driver and his assistant, who presumably were protected by the roof of the truck's cab. The other 10 passengers all died, either of crushing injuries or burns.[5] The bodies had become "stuck on the road with melted road-tar and molasses. They had to be removed by spade-work."

[5]Two other children born after this accident have had memories of being other passengers of the truck who died in it, but I am not reporting their cases in detail in this volume.

It is worth remarking, however, that one of them, Maung Min Min Aung, had no birthmark whatever, although the person whose life he remembered (Ma Ah Bi) had been burned in the accident as badly as Ma Ahmar Yee had been. The informant for this information was U May Maung, who was Maung Min Min Aung's father. Testimony for the second of these other cases was complex and to some degree contradictory.

The survivors were admitted to the Civil Hospital in Meiktila, and the dead bodies were taken to the hospital morgue. Afterward, they were transferred to Tatkon and buried in the Public Cemetery there. Ma Ahmar Yee was about 30 years old when she died.

We have not been able to obtain a satifactory description of the burns and injuries on Ma Ahmar Yee. In 1981 Daw Hmwe told U Win Maung that "the birthmarks [on Ma Khin Hsann Oo] seem to correspond with the injuries suffered by my daughter." Yet in 1986 she told Daw Hnin Aye that when she went to the morgue and first saw Ma Ahmar Yee's body, she became overcome with fright and ran away from the coffin. So she may not have had a good view of the injuries.

U Mya Maung, who was one of the four survivors of the accident, was taken to the morgue (on a stretcher) and was asked to identify the dead bodies so that their relatives could be informed of the tragedy. He gave U Win Maung brief descriptions of the injuries of different victims as he remembered them in 1983. Of Ma Ahmar Yee he said: "The face was not affected; many parts of the body were burned. It seemed to have been crushed by the boxes." U Mya Maung said that having been asked only to identify the bodies he had made no special effort to note the injuries and that his inspection was "brief and casual." The bodies were "all covered with dirt, tar, and molasses." Therefore he also could not furnish an adequate description of Ma Ahmar Yee's injuries.

The Interval between Ma Ahmar Yee's Death and Ma Khin Hsann Oo's Birth

I think the pertinent dates in this case are precise. That of Ma Khin Hsann Oo's birth comes from her horoscope, the date of which was taken from a written record made in a notebook; the note would have been made soon after her birth. The date I have given for Ma Ahmar Yee's death is that on the tombstones of the passengers killed in the accident who were buried in the Public Cemetery at Tatkon, where U Win Maung himself examined them. (Dates on tombstones are usually correct, although I found one in error in Turkey, in the case of Dellâl Beyaz.) If we accept the dates as accurate, as I think we should, Daw Khin Ma was about 2½ months pregnant with Ma Khin Hsann Oo when Ma Ahmar Yee died.

Many Buddhists believe that this fact would make it impossible for Ma Ahmar Yee to have reincarnated in the body of Ma Khin Hsann Oo. My associates and I have studied other cases among Buddhists in which the previous personality died after the conception of the subject who later remembered the life of the previous personality; but individual informants rarely learn about such anomalous cases, and the tradition persists in Burma, Thailand, and Sri Lanka that according to Buddhism they should not occur. Daw Hmwe, Ma Ahmar Yee's mother, learned about Ma Khin Hsann Oo's statements concerning a previous life, and she went to visit her at Ywathit when she was still a young child. She had seen her daughter's body after her death and before its burial; and she said that the birthmarks on Ma Khin Hsann Oo seemed to correspond with the wounds on her daughter. She did not question the honesty of Ma Khin Hsann Oo's parents. Nevertheless, she sus-

pended judgment on the question of whether Ma Khin Hsann Oo was her daughter Ma Ahmar Yee reborn because of her strong conviction about the impossibility—as she saw the matter—of a personality's being conceived in a new body before it had died. Yet she remained open-minded, and she had asked Ma Khin Hsann Oo's mother to continue observing her daughter and note the development of traits in her that would correspond with similar traits in Ma Ahmar Yee. U Win Maung noted that she specified that Ma Khin Hsann Oo's "character, habits, and behavior should correspond to those of her daughter [Ma Ahmar Yee], who was very pious, very clean in her habits, and very fond of cosmetics."

Ma Khin Hsann Oo's Behavior Related to the Previous Life

Ma Khin Hsann Oo had a strong phobia of fire and protested if members of her family lit a kerosene lamp inside the house. This phobia was persisting in 1986, when Ma Khin Hsann Oo was about 12 years old.

As I mentioned, Daw Hmwe had specified three traits of personality that Ma Khin Hsann Oo should show if she were to qualify as her daughter Ma Ahmar Yee reborn. In 1986 Daw Hnin Aye interviewed Ma Khin Hsann Oo's maternal grandmother, Daw Khin Pu, about whether Ma Khin Hsann Oo was then showing these traits. Ma Khin Hsann Oo had not shown unusual piety for a child of her age. However, she was showing the other two qualities that Daw Hmwe had mentioned. First, she was much interested in cosmetics, and Daw Hnin Aye herself noted that Ma Khin Hsann Oo was wearing lipstick and also nail varnish on her fingers and toes. Second, she was unusually clean. Here again, Daw Hnin Aye also made her own observation and noted that Ma Khin Hsann Oo was clean for a village girl; even her fingernails were clean.

Daw Hnin Aye learned from Daw Khin Pu that children would sometimes cruelly tease Ma Khin Hsann Oo by calling out to her a name meaning "the one who has marks," and then they would hide. However, Ma Khin Hsann Oo responded to these taunts vigorously; she would find out the hiding child and then go and swear at the child or fight with him or her. One of Ma Ahmar Yee's old friends, Ma Ngwe Myaing, told Daw Hnin Aye that Ma Ahmar Yee had not been frightened of anyone and had had a sharp tongue.

Ma Khin Hsann Oo's favorite play was that of a trader. In her play she did not particularly trade in cloth (as Ma Ahmar Yee had done), but usually played at selling grains and vegetables.

Ma Khin Hsann Oo's Birthmarks

Figures 9-6 and 9-7 show the general distribution of Ma Khin Hsann Oo's birthmarks in 1981, when she was about 6½ years old. The lower trunk and most of both thighs down to the knees were a continuous area of nevuslike increased pigmentation. The photographs show only the upper parts of this area, but a sketch that U Win Maung made in 1981 indicates the involvement of the entire

Figure 9-6 Birthmarks on the front of the upper trunk, arms and head of Ma Khin Hsann Oo as they appeared in May 1981, when she was 6½ years old.

lower part of the trunk and most of both thighs. In addition, there were many smaller, but still large, black nevi at other sites of the body. Some of these were elevated and wrinkled (Figure 9-8) and hairy (Figure 9-9). I took the close-up photographs shown in Figures 9-8 and 9-9 when I met Ma Khin Hsann Oo in 1984; she was then 9½ years old. I noticed one area that was bullous, but the majority of the birthmarks resembled the two in my close-up photographs.

Daw Khin Ma said that the relative size of the birthmarks had not changed since Ma Khin Hsann Oo's birth, but she thought they were becoming darker. Each summer, during the hot weather, some of the skin involved in the nevi would develop furuncles, and Daw Khin Ma then took Ma Khin Hsann Oo to a doctor for the treatment of these infections. Otherwise, Ma Khin Hsann Oo had not complained of pain at the sites of the birthmarks.

Figure 9-7 Birthmarks on the back of Ma Khin Hsann Oo's upper trunk and arms as they appeared in May 1981.

Daw Khin Ma said that no member of the family, on her side or her husband's side, had had any birthmarks like Ma Khin Hsann Oo's.

Comment. Ma Khin Hsann Oo's largest lesion, the one around the middle of her trunk is a type of giant hyperpigmented nevus known as a "bathing trunk nevus" (Hodgman, Freedman, and Levan, 1971; Reed et al., 1965; Solomon and Esterly, 1973). In addition to the large lesion on the trunk, there are frequently multiple satellite lesions scattered about the body, as on Ma Khin Hsann Oo's skin. In about 10% of patients with this condition a malignant melanoma develops within the lesion (Greeley, Middleton, and Curtin, 1965).

Although I did not see Ma Khin Hsann Oo as a baby, or even as a child until she was 9½ years old, from a comparison of the photographs taken when she was younger and the lesions that I saw in 1984, it seems to me that the lesions had

Figure 9-8 Close-up photograph of a large hyperpigmented nevus on one of Ma Khin Hsann Oo's arms as it appeared in March 1984, when she was 9½ years old. This one had many hairs growing from it.

evolved from apparently flat hyperpigmented macules to the elevated, puckered, and sometimes hairy nevi that I photographed.

Assuming some correspondence between Ma Ahmar Yee's burns and the birthmarks scattered over Ma Khin Hsann Oo's body, I have conjectured that Ma Ahmar Yee's body may have been splattered with burning oil or perhaps with hot liquid sugar that had been released from the containers of the truck and melted by the fire. Because we obtained no satisfactory account of where the burns had been on Ma Ahmar Yee's body, I am not asserting that each of the numerous nevi on Ma Khin Hsann Oo corresponded to a particular burn on Ma Ahmar Yee.

Ma Khin Hsann Oo's Later Development

Daw Hnin Aye was the last member of our team to meet Ma Khin Hsann Oo, which she did in 1986.

Ma Khin Hsann Oo was then still markedly afraid of fire. If someone put firewood on the fire so that its flames seemed too large, she would become excited and say that the fire was blazing.

When Daw Hnin Aye asked Ma Khin Hsann Oo whether she still remembered the previous life, she said that she remembered that she was going to buy cloth on the day that she died.

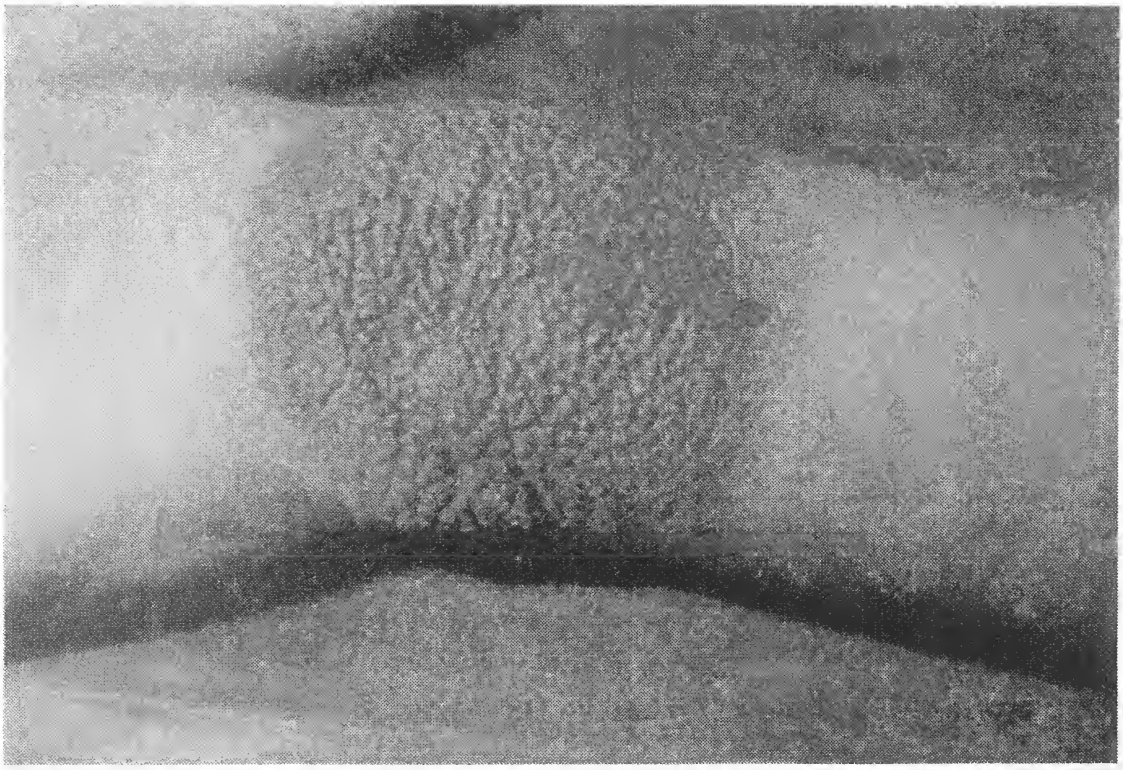

Figure 9-9 Another hyperpigmented nevus on one of Ma Khin Hsann Oo's arms as it appeared in March 1984.

THE CASE OF MA SHWE YEE

Summary of the Case and Its Investigation

Ma Shwe Yee was born in about 1949 in the village of Kyet Mouk, which is in the area of Meiktila in Upper Burma. Her parents were U Htun Zan and his wife, Daw Ngwe Thon. U Htun Zan was a farmer. Ma Shwe Yee was the fourth of her parents' six children.

Ma Shwe Yee had a large birthmark that covered an extensive area of the lower part of her left chest (Figure 9-10).

She did not speak clearly until late, and perhaps was 4 or 5 before she spoke Burmese well enough to be at least partly understood. She spoke other words that were presumed to be Japanese, because she began to communicate that she was from Tokyo, and she expressed a longing to return there. Gradually, she narrated some details of having been a Japanese infantryman who was shot in fighting near Kyet Mouk. She said that an Indian soldier had shot her.

This case remained entirely unnoticed outside Ma Shwe Yee's family until a mechanic in Meiktila, U Maung Ko, told U Win Maung and me about it in 1984. We were able to go almost immediately to Kyet Mouk, which we visited on February 28, 1984. Daw Hnin Aye and U Nu accompanied us.

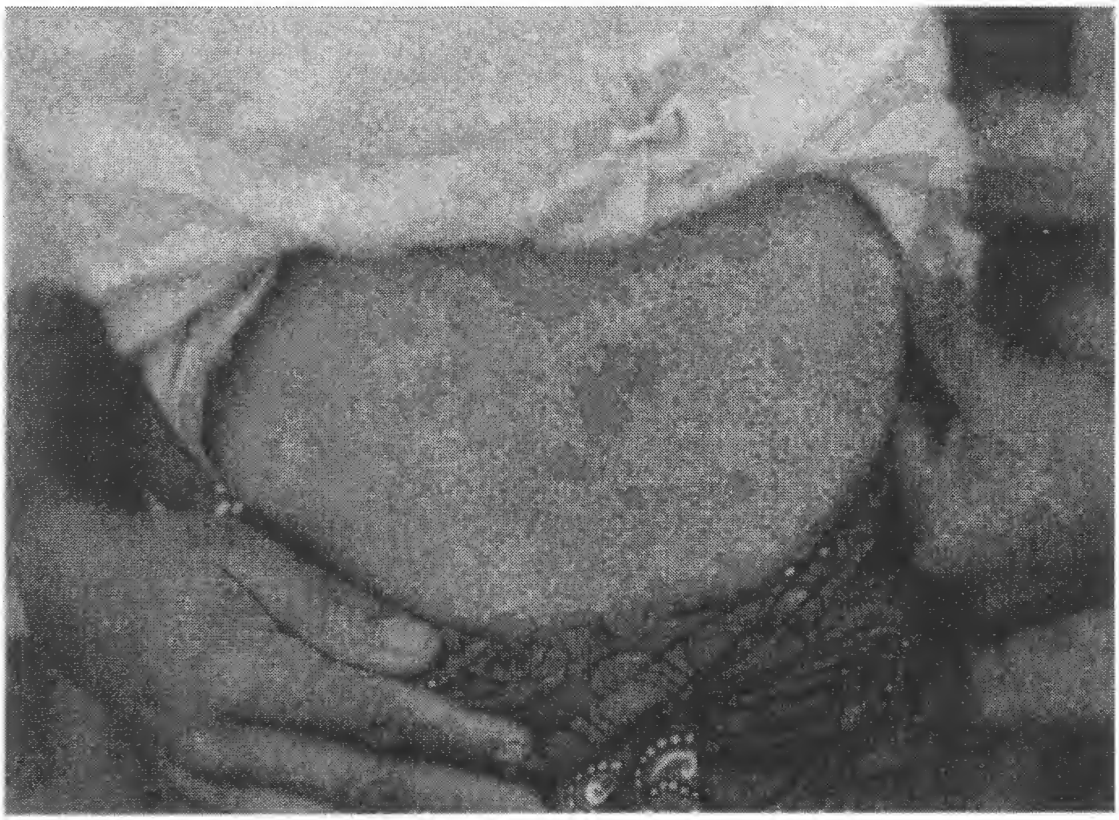

Figure 9-10 Birthmark on Ma Shwe Yee as it appeared in 1984, when she was about 35 years old. The birthmark consisted of a large, irregularly shaped area of hyperpigmentation, approximately 10 centimeters in diameter. It extended over the lower chest and upper abdomen across the midline, but with more of it to the left than to the right of the midline.

Nearly all our information for the case came from Ma Shwe Yee and her father, U Htun Zan. (Daw Ngwe Thon had died before 1984.) A villager of Kyet Mouk, U Pan, contributed some background information, but no corroboration for Ma Shwe Yee's statements.

Relevant Facts of Geography and History

The area around Meiktila was the site of fierce fighting between British and Japanese troops in the early months of 1945. The British captured Meiktila on March 3 and then advanced east and south toward Pyawbwe, which is on the railway line and highway between Rangoon and Mandalay. (See Appendix B.)

Kyet Mouk is east of Meiktila and 5 kilometers west of Thazi, an important railway junction on the Rangoon-Mandalay railway line. The Japanese Army occupied the village, and at one stage they did not allow the villagers to enter it during the fighting. After the Japanese retreated (farther east and south), the villagers returned to the village and found four burial mounds under a mango tree near U Htun Zan's house. These were sites where someone had buried some of the Japanese dead, and they were later visited by members of a team from the Japanese War Graves Commission.

The fighting in the area of Kyet Mouk took place some time between March 3, when the British took Meiktila, and April 11, when they captured Pyawbwe, which is about 30 kilometers east and south of Thazi. We can fix the date of death of a Japanese soldier killed in this area as having occurred between these two dates.

During the fighting in this area, Indian troops were among the units of the British Army engaging the Japanese (Allen, 1984).

Statements Made by Ma Shwe Yee

According to U Htun Zan, Ma Shwe Yee said that she was from Tokyo, where she had three sons. She mentioned a name for the Japanese soldier, but in 1984 U Htun Zan was unsure what it was. Ma Shwe Yee did not give names for the soldier's sons. She said that she had been shot under a mango tree and also buried under that tree. She indicated as the one she meant the mango tree near U Htun Zan's house under which the four Japanese burial mounds had been found.

Some other details that Ma Shwe Yee said she remembered about the previous life were not mentioned by U Htun Zan, but I do not know whether he had forgotten them or whether she had simply not spoken about them earlier.

Ma Shwe Yee's Statements in 1984. Ma Shwe Yee was about 35 years old when we met her in 1984. She said that her memories of the previous life had completely faded. Nevertheless, she furnished some details of her memories that supplemented the few items that her father remembered of what she had said earlier. Perhaps the following details derived partly from some residual imaged memories and partly from memories of what she had earlier said about the imaged memories.

She said that the man whose life she remembered had been called "Mar-Chit" and that he had been an only child. He lived in Tokyo. He had been married to a woman called "Tin Nu," and they had four children, of whom one had died in infancy. He joined the army at the age of 30 and came to Burma after training in Japan. The soldier had been an infantryman, but Ma Shwe Yee did not remember his rank. There were about 60 soldiers in the unit of the Japanese Army occupying Kyet Mouk. She said that the soldier had not been killed in hand-to-hand fighting, but that he was shot from a distance by an Indian soldier. She remembered that the bullet had hit the soldier in the lower left chest (at the site of her birthmark). The soldier had been fetching water and was under the mango tree by U Htun Zan's house when he was wounded. He did not die instantly, but about 2 hours after being shot.

Although as a child Ma Shwe Yee had told her father that the Japanese soldier had been buried under the mango tree (as well as shot near it), in 1984 she said she was uncertain that the soldier whose life she remembered had been buried near the mango tree. However, Ma Shwe Yee remained sure that he had been shot near this tree.

Comment. The names *Mar-Chit* and *Tin Nu* are much closer to Burmese names than to Japanese ones.

As there were no Burmese villagers in Kyet Mouk at the time of the fighting around and in it, we do not know whether any Japanese soldiers were in fact wounded under the mango tree by U Htun Zan's house. However, Japanese sol-

diers were buried under the tree. Members of the Japanese War Graves Commission visited the village in about 1980 and dug up the burial mounds near the mango tree. They would not have done this if they had not had grounds for believing that Japanese soldiers were buried there; the disinterment was intended to help in identifying the soldiers. Their insignia would indicate to what unit they had been attached, and some might have been individually identified.

It is probable, although not certain, that the Japanese soldiers buried under the mango tree had also been killed there or in the vicinity. No one on either side of the combat would have had time to transport bodies for burial to places far removed from where the soldiers had been killed. If the body of the Japanese soldier whose life Ma Shwe Yee seemed to recall had been left unburied by the retreating Japanese, units of the advancing British Army might later have buried it or perhaps instructed Burmese villagers to do so.

Ma Shwe Yee's Memories of Experiences After the Japanese Soldier's Death and Before Her Birth. Ma Shwe Yee had some vague memories of experiences as a discarnate personality after the Japanese soldier's death. She remembered meeting with a "supervisor of discarnates" who gave her some instructions, but he did not advise her where or when to be reborn.

Ma Shwe Yee's Behavior Related to the Previous Life

Circumstances and Manner of Ma Shwe Yee's Speaking about the Previous Life. When Ma Shwe Yee was about 4, U Htun Zan took her to the local monastery. A gong was struck, and Ma Shwe Yee told her father to say his prayers. It struck him that she had a precocious interest in religious practices and might remember a previous life. After this, she began—on cloudy days, as is often claimed with Burmese subjects—to talk about a previous life in Japan. As I mentioned, she was slow to learn Burmese, and when trying first to say how many sons she had in the previous life, she held up three fingers.

Ma Shwe Yee was "very emotional" when she spoke about the previous life, and she said that she wanted to go back home, that is, to Japan.

In 1984 she told us that she recalled the previous life when awake and never in dreams. She said that as a child she stayed apart from other children.

Ma Shwe Yee's Unusual Language Spoken as a Young Child. Ma Shwe Yee spoke a strange language up to the age of 5 or 6. Some special effort had to be made to instruct her in Burmese, and she did not speak that language effectively until she was between 6 and 7 years old. As is sometimes the case with Burmese children who remember the previous lives of Japanese soldiers, Ma Shwe Yee's family thought that the strange language she spoke was Japanese. However, they never confirmed this. U Pan, a villager who had worked as a cook for the Japanese Army, had picked up a little Japanese, and he thought that Ma Shwe Yee had been speaking Japanese. This turned out to be an inference on his part, because when we questioned him, he said that he lived some distance away from U Htun Zan's house, and he had never actually heard Ma Shwe Yee speaking Japanese.

The established facts in this matter therefore seem to be that Ma Shwe Yee spoke a strange language when she was under the age of 5; and that compared with other Burmese children she was slow to learn the Burmese language.

Ma Shwe Yee's Play at Being a Soldier. When Ma Shwe Yee was young, she used to carry a Japanese bayonet around and occasionally played at being a soldier. I have no note about whether other children of the family also played at being a soldier.

Ma Shwe Yee's Masculine Behavior. Ma Shwe Yee showed some masculine traits when young. She was often rough in play, and she preferred to wear long trousers up to the age of 8 or 10.

Ma Shwe Yee's "Japanese" Behavior. Ma Shwe Yee's preference for wearing trousers should probably be considered a "Japanese" trait at least as much as a masculine one. A Burmese village boy of her age would have worn short pants or a Burmese longyi (of male style) and would not have worn trousers. In a few other respects Ma Shwe Yee showed behavior more characteristic of Japanese than of Burmese children. She complained of the heat in Upper Burma and bathed more often than the usual Burmese child. She was also notably hardworking compared with other Burmese children. Also, unlike most of them she was not docile, but rather strong-willed. However, she seems not to have grumbled about the Burmese food or to have asked for Japanese dishes.

Ma Shwe Yee's Birthmark

Figure 9-10 shows Ma Shwe Yee's birthmark. It was in the lower chest and upper abdomen, more to the left than the right of the midline. It extended over an irregularly shaped area approximately 10 centimeters in diameter. It consisted only of increased pigmentation compared with the surrounding skin. In some places it had a speckled appearance.

Because the birthmark was near Ma Shwe Yee's breast, Daw Hnin Aye took her aside and examined her more closely to see whether she could find one or more discrete birthmarks on the front or back of Ma Shwe Yee's chest. (In 18 other cases—some already reported in this work—we have found birthmarks corresponding to bullet wounds of entry and wounds of exit; see Chapter 12.) However, Daw Hnin Aye said that she could find no birthmark that seemed to suggest either a wound of entry (at the front of the chest) or a wound of exit (at the back).

Comment. Although Daw Hnin Aye was careful, she had not, at the time we studied this case, had much experience in examining subjects' birthmarks; and she may not have noticed birthmarks that were present. A few of the birthmarks that correspond to wounds of entry have been extremely small and difficult to see.

Other Relevant Medical Information. Ma Shwe Yee said that she never had pain in the area of the birthmark.

No other member of the family had a birthmark at the site of Ma Shwe Yee's. Indeed, the only other birthmark in the family that U Htun Zan could recall

was a red spot that he thought was on the right side of one of Ma Shwe Yee's younger brothers. (He did not specify this birthmark further.)

When U Win Maung and I investigated cases of Burmese subjects who remembered the previous lives of Japanese soldiers, he sometimes remarked that the subject "looks like a Japanese." However, U Win Maung said that for him Ma Shwe Yee had a normal Burmese facial appearance.

Other Relevant Information

The unit of the Japanese Army occupying Kyet Mouk used U Htun Zan's house as an office. He had been friendly with the Japanese and particularly with one of the soldiers who was about 30 years old. However, he did not think Ma Shwe Yee resembled this Japanese friend in her appearance.

A Conjecture about the Occurrence of Ma Shwe Yee's Birthmark. Ma Shwe Yee said that the Japanese soldier whose life she remembered lived for about 2 hours after being shot. Too disabled to walk or even to be moved, he was left behind by the retreating Japanese soldiers of his unit. He must have died of shock and hemorrhage. The hemorrhage would have been largely internal, but to some extent also external, with blood flowing around the wound of entry. I suggest that the blood congealing on the soldier's body became fixed in the soldier's memory and eventually affected the embryonic development of Ma Shwe Yee's body.[6]

Ma Shwe Yee's Later Development

Ma Shwe Yee attended school up to the third grade and then discontinued. (I believe this was related to the death of her mother, which obliged her to help with the family's cattle.)

Like most of the subjects who have remembered previous lives as persons of the opposite sex, Ma Shwe Yee seems eventually to have developed entirely normally as a female. Her menarche occurred at the age of 13. When she was 20, she married a villager of Kyet Mouk, Maung Po The, and they had several children. Her pregnancies were uncomplicated.

U Htun Zan said that Ma Shwe Yee had stopped speaking about the previous life at the age of about 8. She herself told us that she had preserved her memories—I presume she meant what I call the primary imaged memories—until the age of 20, about the age when she married.

[6]Other subjects who had birthmarks that may have corresponded to blood left on the body of the previous personality when it was buried or cremated include: Ariya Noikerd, Navalkishore Yadav, Sunita Singh, and Narong Yensiri. Ma Chit Chit Than had a birthmark that corresponded to a place where red medicine had been spilled on the face of the previous personality in her case.

In 1984 Ma Shwe Yee said that she still became "emotional" when she thought about the previous life. She said that when, in about 1980, she met members of the Japanese War Graves Commission who came to Kyet Mouk, she was so overcome with emotion that she wept and could not speak. However, she said that she no longer wished to return to Japan; she described herself as quite content with her life in Burma.

Comment

Despite our efforts, U Win Maung and I have never identified by name a Japanese soldier corresponding to the statements of any one of the now numerous Burmese children who have remembered previous lives as Japanese soldiers. In this case, as in several others, we have only shown that a Japanese soldier (unidentified) was probably killed within a few hundred meters of the place where the subject was born.

THE CASE OF MAUNG WIN AUNG

Summary of the Case and Its Investigation

Maung Win Aung was born at Sardaung village, near Pyawbwe, Upper Burma, in 1977. His parents were U Tin Maung and his wife, Daw Yin. Maung Win Aung was the second of their children; they had had four children by the time this case was investigated in 1984-1986. U Tin Maung was a laborer in poor circumstances.

Maung Win Aung was born with extensive areas of hyperpigmentation covering most of his right arm and part of his back. During her pregnancy with Maung Win Aung, Daw Yin had dreamed that her deceased father, U Sein, wished to reincarnate as her child. U Sein had been killed in an accident many years earlier. The dream and Maung Win Aung's large birthmark probably led to his being identified as the reincarnation of U Sein.

Maung Win Aung began to speak when he was about 1 year old and first referred to a previous life when he was between 2 and 3 years old. He said that he wanted to go back to his village, and when his mother questioned him about this, he said that he was U Sein from Batta village. He gave some details of how U Sein had died.

Daw Hnin Aye had relatives living in Pyawbwe and Sardaung village. She learned of this case in late 1983 or early 1984 and made a preliminary investigation of it in February 1984. Early in 1985 she interviewed another informant for the case. In February 1986, I went to Sardaung accompanied by U Win Maung, U Nu, and Daw Hnin Aye. We interviewed Daw Yin and U Tet Sein, a cousin of U Sein. By that time Maung Win Aung had forgotten the previous life.

Persons Interviewed during the Investigation

In Sardaung village we interviewed:
Maung Win Aung
Daw Yin, Maung Win Aung's mother
U Tet Sein, U Sein's cousin

In Batta village Daw Hnin Aye interviewed:
Daw Khin Yee, U Sein's wife

Maung Win Aung's parents had separated, and we did not interview his father. U Sein's parents had both died before we investigated the case. U Tet Sein had been a close friend of his cousin U Sein, and he was our principal informant for U Sein's death.

Relevant Facts of Geography

Sardaung is a small village with a brickworks and barely 100 inhabitants, which is on the southern border of Pyawbwe. Batta, where U Sein had lived, is 3 kilometers southwest of Pyawbwe. Yamethin, where U Sein died, is a large town 20 kilometers south of Pyawbwe. Both Pyawbwe and Yamethin are on the main highway and main railway line between Rangoon and Mandalay.

The Life and Death of U Sein

U Sein was born in Batta village in about 1921. His parents were U Nyi and Daw Phyu. When he grew up, he worked as a farmer and flower seller. He married Daw Khin Yee, and they had four children. The oldest of his sons was named Maung Japan because he remembered the previous life of a Japanese soldier killed in Burma during World War II. (I investigated Maung Japan's case in the 1970s, but have not published a report of it.) U Sein's third child and only daughter was Daw Yin, who became Maung Win Aung's mother.

On a day in 1956, U Sein went to Yamethin in order to sell flowers. U Tet Sein was going to Yamethin at the same time with the intention of joining the police force, and they made the journey together. In Yamethin, U Sein decided to have something to eat and stopped at the stall of a pancake vendor. U Tet Sein went on his way, but within a few minutes people came running after him and said that U Sein and the pancake vendor had both been run over by a bulldozer. The operator had apparently not seen them and had driven his machine onto them, killing both instantly. U Tet Sein went back to the place of the accident and saw that "the bulldozer had rammed into the right side of U Sein, and the right hand and right back were under the bulldozer."

U Tet Sein took U Sein's body back to Batta, where it was buried. The corpse was washed before being buried.

There were several guides to the dating of U Sein's death. In 1986 Daw Yin said that she was then 36 years old and that she had been a child of 6 when her father died. She remembered going to see his dead body. If she gave her ages with reasonable accuracy, her father had died in 1956. In addition, U Nu (who maintained a residence in Pyawbwe) remembered the accident and said it had occurred in July 1956. However, Daw Khin Yee's memory led to an earlier date for U Sein's death. In 1985 she said that U Sein had been dead 31 years and this estimate would have put his death in 1954.

U Sein was about 35 years old when he died.

Announcing Dreams

In 1985 Daw Khin Yee told Daw Hnin Aye that she had dreamed two or three times of her husband, U Sein, soon after his death. In the dreams he had said that he wanted to be reborn among them, but that he had been assigned to guard Kyee Ni Lake at Yamethin.[7] Later, Daw Khin Yee remarried and stopped dreaming about U Sein.

Daw Yin said that when she was about 1 month pregnant with Maung Win Aung, she saw her father dressed in a white shirt sitting at the head of her bed. He was giving her some money and saying that he was coming to stay with her. Daw Yin thought that she had only been half-asleep at the time of this experience, and she described it as "a sort of apparition." She remembered it as having occurred at 9:00 p.m.

U Tet Sein, who also lived in Sardaung, in a house just a few feet from that of Daw Yin, remembered that Daw Yin had come to him one night about 1:00 a.m. and said: "Father has just been here. He gave me some money and said that he would like to stay with us." U Tet Sein remembered that Daw Yin was unsure whether she had had a dream or an apparitional experience.

Statements and Recognitions Made by Maung Win Aung

In this section I shall combine the information furnished by Daw Yin and U Tet Sein.

Maung Win Aung said that he was U Sein from Batta village. He showed his birthmark to Daw Yin and said that it was from being crushed by a "car." (At the young age when he first spoke he did not have a vocabulary for distinguishing

[7]The Burmese belief in reincarnation includes the idea that some discarnate persons are assigned the role of "guardian spirits" to protect special buildings, such as palaces or temples, and to watch over treasure or constructions of particular importance, such as bridges, dams, and lakes. The lake at Yamethin was the residue of a moat that a prince had originally built around a palace.

The Burmese believe that they can sometimes release "guardian spirits" (so that they can be reborn again) by means of special prayers or other good deeds of which the merit is transferred to the detained discarnate personality.

Daw Khin Yee told her mother-in-law, Daw Phyu, about her dream, and Daw Phyu prayed earnestly for her son's release from being a guardian spirit.

different vehicles.) He said that he had been eating when he was hit by the car and that both he and the vendor had died on the spot. He told his mother that he had gold and money buried at his home and that he would give it to her some day.

When U Tet Sein asked Maung Win Aung why he had not come back to them sooner, he said that he had had to keep watch over the lake at Yamethin.

Daw Yin said that Maung Win Aung had showed her the basket in which U Sein had carried flowers when he went to sell them in the bazaar. He said the basket was his.

U Tet Sein took Maung Win Aung to the house in Batta village where U Sein had lived and asked him there whether he could recognize it. Maung Win Aung said: "Yes, of course. That is where we lived together and where we roasted corn."

Comment. Maung Win Aung might have guessed that U Tet Sein would lead him to U Sein's house. His recognition of the house itself therefore means little; but his statement that U Sein and U Tet Sein lived there together and roasted corn there seems to have been spontaneous and unguided by U Tet Sein.

Maung Win Aung's Statements in 1984-1986. In 1984 Maung Win Aung told Daw Hnin Aye that he remembered being killed by a big car. (He was still using the word *car* to describe the bulldozer that had killed U Sein.) He said that he remembered the family and the possessions that he had had in the previous life.

In 1986 Maung Win Aung told us that he no longer remembered the previous life. This accorded with his mother's statement that he had stopped talking about the previous life the year before, when he was about 8 years old.

Maung Win Aung's Behavior Related to the Previous Life

Circumstances and Manner of Maung Win Aung's Speaking about the Previous Life. As I mentioned, Maung Win Aung's opening statement about the previous life expressed his wish to go back to "his village." His mother remembered his saying: "I think I should go home. It is better for me than staying here."

From the age of about 1, Maung Win Aung slept with U Tet Sein, to whom he was much attached. At night, before they went to sleep, Maung Win Aung would talk to U Tet Sein about the previous life. Sometimes U Tet Sein asked Maung Win Aung questions about it. He recalled asking Maung Win Aung whether he remembered how they had worked together. Maung Win Aung said he remembered going with U Tet Sein to transplant rice. He asked U Tet Sein whether he remembered how they had roasted corn over a fire.

Apart from these nocturnal discussions, Maung Win Aung, like many other Burmese subjects, talked most about the previous life on cloudy days.

Up to 1984 Maung Win Aung continued to wish to go to Batta and said that he was unhappy at Sardaung.

Maung Win Aung's Phobia of Vehicles. Maung Win Aung had a phobia of all vehicles, not just large ones like bulldozers. This phobia persisted up to the time of our meeting him in 1986.

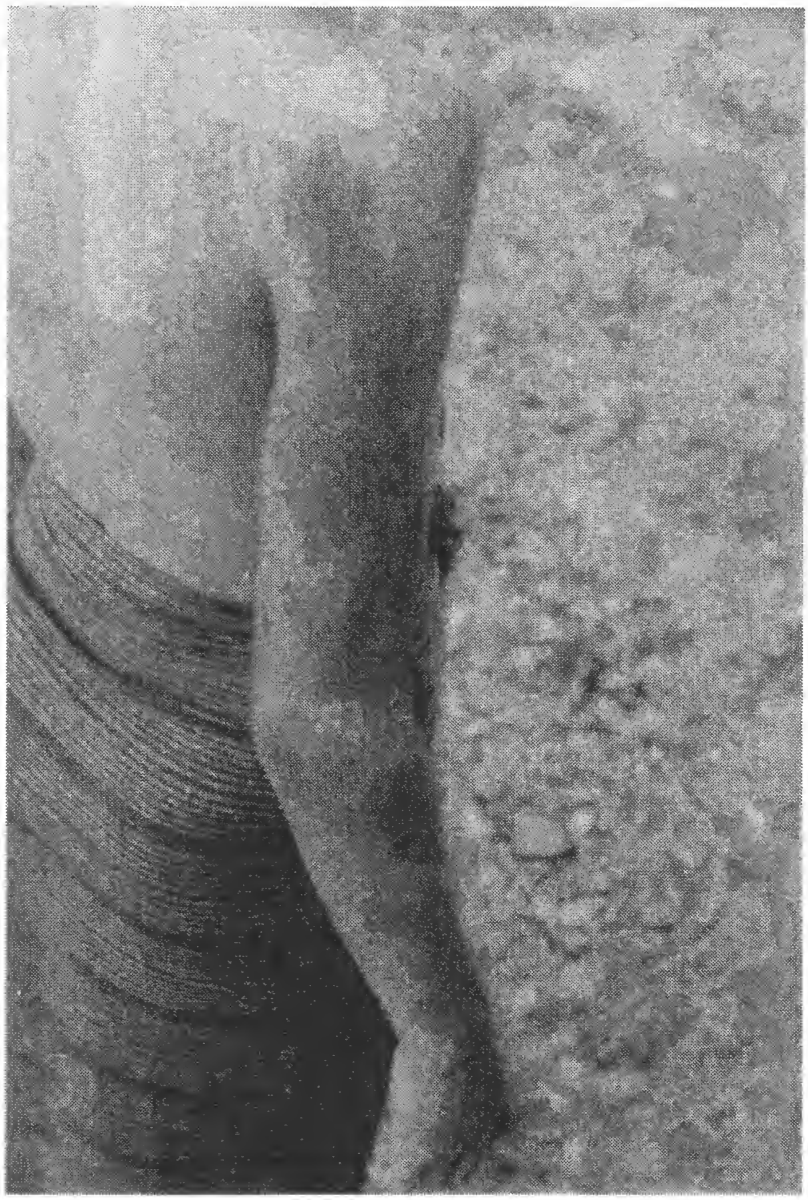

Figure 9-11 Right arm of Maung Win Aung as it appeared in February 1986, when he was about 9 years old. The birthmarks were extensive, patchy areas of hyperpigmentation involving the entire arm.

Maung Win Aung's Birthmarks

Figures 9-11 and 9-12 show two views of the extensive areas of hyperpigmentation on Maung Win Aung's right arm and back. His mother said that at his birth his right upper back had also been involved in the birthmark, but this part of his skin had since become normal. Two patches of hyperpigmentation remained on the back near the midline.

Figure 9-12 Posterior view of the back and right arm of Maung Win Aung. This photograph was taken at the same time as that of Figure 9-11. When Maung Win Aung was younger, an extensive area of his upper right back had been hyperpigmented, but by 1986 only two small areas of hyperpigmentation remained on the back, near the midline.

When he was younger, Maung Win Aung had complained of pain in the area of the birthmarks during the rainy season. However, by 1986 the affected area was no longer painful.

No other member of the family had a birthmark.

Comment

The interval between U Sein's death and Maung Win Aung's birth—21 years—is unusually long for Burmese cases or, for that matter, for any case in the collection of

the University of Virginia.[8] The informants for the case, including Maung Win Aung himself, accounted for this lengthy "intermission" with the explanation that U Sein had been detained as a discarnate "guardian spirit" at the lake in Yamethin.

The information that U Sein's dead body was washed before it was buried perhaps permits us to exclude blood on his body as the image stimulus for Maung Win Aung's birthmarks. I believe they corresponded instead to extensive abrasions on the right side of U Sein's body where the bulldozer ran onto him.

THE CASE OF PATRICIA FAIRLEY

Introduction

The testimony for this case derives from the statements of a single informant, who was the subject's maternal grandmother and also a sister-in-law of the previous personality. I was unable to obtain firsthand verification of the injury on the previous personality to which Patricia's birthmark corresponded or corroboration of an announcing dream that her maternal grandfather had. However, I believe my single informant was reliable, and I think the case deserves to be put into the record as another example of a birthmark apparently related to a burn on a deceased person.

Summary of the Case and Its Investigation

Patricia Fairley was born in Port Edward, British Columbia, Canada, on November 7, 1975. Her mother, Elizabeth Fairley, was unmarried at the time of Patricia's birth, and Patricia seems to have been largely raised—at least up to 1981—by her maternal grandmother, Sarah Fairley, who was my informant. At the time I met them, Patricia was living with Sarah and her husband, Wilbur Fairley, in Prince Rupert. They were members of the Tsimshian tribe.

Wilbur Fairley had a sister, Catherine (Fairley) Talbot, who had died in 1963 in Vancouver, where she had lived during the last 10 years of her life. According to Sarah, Wilbur Fairley dreamed (around the time of Patricia's birth) that his sister Catherine was arriving in Prince Rupert on a bus. He rushed to the bus station only to find that the bus had arrived and his sister was waiting for him. He asked her what she was doing in Prince Rupert, and she said that she had come to stay.

I did not learn exactly when Wilbur Fairley had this dream (I shall explain later that he declined to confirm that he had had it), but Sarah Fairley said that Wilbur had his dream "a few days after" Patricia's birth.

Patricia was born with a large nevus flammeus on the dorsal surface of her right forearm (Figures 9-13 and 9-14). (Sarah Fairley saw Patricia and noticed the

[8]Other cases with unusually long intervals between the previous personality's death and the subject's birth include those of: Wijeratne (18.5 years), Augustine Nwachi (21 years), Hair Kam Kanya (16 years), Obike Nwonye (36 years), Charles Porter (42 years), and Uwamachi Okogbue (45 years). Table 14-4 lists 13 cases with intervals of 8 or more years.

Figure 9-13 Anterior aspect of Patricia Fairley's right arm as it appeared in May 1981, when she was 5½ years old. The lateral part of the arm and hand had an extensive nevus flammeus.

birthmark almost immediately after she was born.) Wilbur's dream made Patricia's family think that she was Catherine Fairley reincarnated. They did not, however, connect Patricia's birthmark with Catherine until Patricia became able to speak and said, with reference to the birthmark: "My burn is bothering me. I was burned long ago."

Wilbur Fairley had a vague memory that his sister had burned herself, but could furnish no details; he said his sister was much older than himself. Sarah Fairley asked one of Catherine Talbot's sons, Henry, whether his mother had ever burned herself. He said that she had burned herself on the arm when an oil stove had tipped over. He had not said on which arm she had burned herself.

Figure 9-14 Posterior aspect of Patricia Fairley's right arm showing an extensive nevus flammeus. This photograph was taken at the same time as that of Figure 9-13.

Apart from her references to being burned, Patricia made no other statements about the previous life that her grandmother remembered, but she did make a few pertinent recognitions that I shall describe below.

I learned about this case in 1981, but have no note of how it came to my attention. Probably an informant for another case among the Tsimshian people directed me to Sarah Fairley. (Informants in that part of the world sometimes recommended that I consult a person who was known to be knowledgeable about the traditional religion and a likely source of information about cases.) On May 14 and 15, 1981, I had two lengthy talks with Sarah Fairley and an ineffective one with her husband, Wilbur. I also met Patricia, chatted with her a little, examined her arm, and photographed her.

Subsequently, I tried to reach informants, such as Henry Talbot, who could provide firsthand information about the burn on Catherine's arm, but these efforts were unsuccessful.

An Attempt to Estimate When Catherine Talbot Burned Her Arm

Henry Talbot told Sarah Fairley that he himself (who was born in about 1943) was "quite small" when his mother had burned herself. If he was old enough for the accident to have impressed itself on his memory, yet still "quite small," we may assume that he was between 5 and 10 years old at the time. If we suppose that he was 8 years old when his mother burned herself, the accident happened in about 1951, that is, 12 years before Catherine Talbot's death in 1963. These calculations cannot be accurate to within more than 1 or 2 years at best, and they may be even less accurate. However, they suffice to show that the case belongs in the small group in which the pertinent wound occurred at least several years before the previous personality's death and had no connection with the death.[9]

Statements and Recognitions Made by Patricia

I have already said that Sarah Fairley mentioned no statements Patricia had made about the previous life apart from her references to the birthmark as where she had been burned "a long time ago."

Sarah Fairley said that Patricia had spontaneously recognized one of Catherine Talbot's sons and called him by his nickname. This was Thomas Talbot, alias "Paddy Joe." When Patricia saw him, she said: "I know him. That's Paddy Joe." After saying this she ran up to him. This was the first time Patricia and Thomas Talbot had met.

Sarah Fairley said that when Catherine's cousins visited them, Patricia seemed to know who they were before anyone had told her, but I did not learn details of these recognitions.

Attempts to Corroborate Sarah Fairley's Testimony

Wilbur Fairley provided my first disappointment in the effort to corroborate Sarah's testimony. Although he answered a few elementary questions, he refused to cooperate further. (During the study of more than 175 cases in northwestern North America, I must have talked with more than a thousand informants, and he was one of fewer than 10 who would not assist me.) When I asked him about the announcing dream about his sister Catherine that Sarah said he had had just after Patricia's birth, he would neither deny nor confirm it. He said dismissively that he dreamed of his relatives "all the time."

[9]Other cases in which a birthmark corresponded to a wound incurred 1 or more years before the previous personality's death include those of: Savitri Devi Pathak, Dorabeth Crosby, Jennifer Pollock, Linda Chijioke, and Maung Nyunt Win.

I approached Catherine's older brother, Edward Fairley. He lived in Port Edward, and I telephoned him to ask whether he knew anything about a burn on his sister. He did not, and he referred me back to Wilbur Fairley. Next I tried to reach Henry Talbot, Catherine's son, who had (according to Sarah Fairley) verified to her that his mother had burned one of her arms. I learned that he was working on Vancouver Island, and one of his nephews, whom I reached on the telephone in Vancouver, said he would send me his address and also that of his uncle, Thomas Talbot, whom Sarah Fairley said Patricia had recognized. Unfortunately, he never did so, and a letter I wrote to him later remained unanswered. In April 1984, I was again in Vancouver and resumed the search for Catherine Talbot's relatives. However, the telephone number I had used before no longer put me in contact with Thomas Talbot's nephew; the relevant telephone number appeared to have been changed.

I also failed to obtain a copy of Catherine Talbot's death certificate. This, too, was a rare failure for that part of the world, because I have been able to obtain pertinent birth and death certificates for nearly all our cases in northwestern North America. This failure might have been due to my not having the names of Catherine Talbot's parents. It is possible also that she remarried late in life and died under a new married name; but I think Sarah Fairley would have known of this later marriage, if there had been one. (I did obtain a copy of Patricia's birth certificate and so am sure of her birthdate.)

Patricia's Birthmark

Figures 9-13 and 9-14 show that Patricia had an extensive nevus flammeus covering much of the dorsal surface of her right arm. The affected area extended about 5 centimeters above her elbow and also included the proximal parts of the dorsal surfaces of the fingers. The birthmark blanched on pressure.

When Patricia was younger (than she was in May 1981), she had complained of pain in the area of the birthmark. Patricia told me in 1981 that the area of the birthmark was not then hurting her and did not itch. However, I noticed that on one of the two days when I met her she scratched the area of the birthmark.

Sarah Fairley said that when Patricia was born, the birthmark had been more prominent than it was in 1981. It was darker at her birth. She thought it was fading. She said it was more prominent on some days than on others.

Other Relevant Information

Patricia had no phobia of fires or stoves.

No other member of the family had a birthmark like Patricia's.

Comment

From the admittedly fragmentary information that I obtained I believe that Catherine Talbot did not often see other members of her family during the last 12

years of her life, that is, in the period after she burned her arm. She lived first in Metlakatla, which is a somewhat isolated village across the harbor from Prince Rupert. (I have been there several times, and one can reach it only by boat.) For the last 10 years of her life she lived in Vancouver. When I told Wilbur Fairley that his brother Edward had said he knew nothing about a burn on their sister Catherine, he replied that Edward "could not know anything about it. He was at the cannery." (He almost certainly meant the cannery at Port Edward, which is about 10 kilometers from Prince Rupert; it was there that I reached Edward Fairley on the telephone.) Wilbur did not say why being at the cannery would have prevented Edward from learning about an accident his sister had had. I have already mentioned that Wilbur did not cooperate with my inquiries.

In addition to the geographical separation between Catherine Talbot and other members of her family during the later years of her life, another reason may have hindered the spread of information about her burn. Assuming that Patricia's birthmark derived from a burn on Catherine Talbot, the burn should have been a second-degree one. A first-degree burn would have affected the epidermis only and healed completely. It would not, according to my hypothesis, give rise to a birthmark if Catherine Talbot reincarnated. However, a second-degree burn would probably have healed with a somewhat disfiguring scar. Catherine Talbot might have covered the scar with long-sleeved dresses and talked little or not at all about it. I regret the absence of many items of information missing from this case; not least of these is some account of Catherine Talbot's psychological reaction to the burn she was said to have had.

THE CASE OF YUSUF GÜVEN

Introduction

This case illustrates particularly well the primacy of qualities in the subject's skin over the type of wound inflicted on the previous personality. Although the case is unsolved, its other features resemble those of standard cases among the Alevis of Turkey, and I feel justified in including here a report of its main features.

Summary of the Case and Its Investigation

Yusuf Güven was born in Samandağ in the province of Hatay, Turkey, in September 1975. His parents were Nuri Güven and his wife, Azize. They were Alevis. Yusuf was the second of their four children. Nuri Güven owned a motorcycle with which he transported other persons for fares.

At Yusuf's birth, or almost immediately after it, he was found to have three birthmarks—one on the left side of his chest laterally (Figure 9-15), a second on the lower front of his chest inferior to the nipple, and a third on the abdomen superior to the umbilicus. (These are faintly visible in Figure 9-17.)

Azize had a dream two days *after* Yusuf's birth in which three women appeared and claimed to be the mother, the sister, and the wife of the man who had been reborn as Yusuf. However, the dream included nothing to indicate any man known to Azize, and Yusuf's parents did not attach any interpretation to his birthmarks until he himself began to speak about a previous life.

Yusuf began to speak coherently when he was about 2 years old and almost immediately started referring to a previous life. He also showed some unusual behavior that accorded with his statements.

Dr. Can Polat studied this case first in June 1984, when he was in Samandağ for the study of other cases. Yusuf, then a boy of nearly 9, learned about his investigations and volunteered to give information about his own case. I have not met Yusuf myself. Dr. Polat interviewed Yusuf, his mother, and a neighbor, who had also been the midwife when Yusuf was born.

In September 1986 Dr. Polat interviewed Yusuf's father, Nuri Güven, but found him unable to provide any information additional to what Yusuf's mother had already furnished.

Statements Made by Yusuf

Yusuf said that he was a grocer of İskenderun called İbrahim and that he was married and had two sons and a daughter. He further stated that he was prosperous and owned a house that was divided into two apartments; it was dark red in color.

Yusuf said that he had been killed in a fight with "enemies," whom he did not name. He explained his birthmarks as resulting from different wounds. The lateral birthmark on his left chest was due, he said, to a blow with a stick that he had been given during the fight. He had also been stabbed, and the birthmark on the front of his lower left chest resulted from the stab wound. Finally, he said that he was shot in the abdomen, and he explained the birthmark near his umbilicus as derived from the gunshot wound.

Attempt to Verify Yusuf's Statements. Yusuf's parents knew no grocer in İskenderun (which is about 50 kilometers north of Samandağ) who had died in the circumstances that Yusuf mentioned. Dr. Polat obtained from the Secretary of the İskenderun Grocers Association a list of all grocers named İbrahim. He planned to enquire for one matching Yusuf's statements, but, as of this writing, he has not been able to do this.

Yusuf's Behavior Related to the Previous Life

Yusuf expressed a desire to return to the family of the previous personality, but his wish to do this was not as strong as that which many other subjects of these cases have shown. He said that if taken to the previous home he would recognize it; yet he could not give a detailed description of it.

In early childhood Yusuf had a phobia of guns, but he lost this when he was between 5 and 6 years old. Later, he enjoyed playing with toy guns. He also

Figure 9-15 Birthmark on the lateral aspect of Yusuf Güven's left chest as it appeared in June 1984, when Yusuf was not quite 9 years old. The birthmark was an irregularly shaped ovoid hyperpigmented macule, approximately 5-6 centimeters long. Yusuf said this birthmark corresponded to a blow with a stick.

expressed a wish to own and manage a grocery store, and during holidays he worked in a local grocery store in Samandağ.

Yusuf's Birthmarks

Figure 9-15 shows the birthmark on the lateral aspect of Yusuf's left chest. It was a large hyperpigmented macule; Figure 9-16 shows a close-up view of it. It was ovoid in shape, had an irregular border, and was 5-6 centimeters long.

Figure 9-17 shows the inferior part of Yusuf's chest and the superior part of his abdomen. A linear birthmark was located about 12 centimeters below the left nipple. This mark was 6-8 centimeters long and about 0.5 centimeter wide at its widest. Figure 9-18 shows a close-up view of this birthmark. It also was a hyperpigmented macule, but it had a central area that was pink and less pigmented than the peripheral portions of the birthmark. Azize Güven said that this birthmark was bleeding when Yusuf was born.

Figure 9-17 also shows a round hyperpigmented macule located in the 1 o'clock position about 4-5 centimeters superior to the umbilicus. This macule was about 1.5 centimeters in diameter. Figure 9-19 shows a close-up view of it.

Figure 9-16 Close-up photograph of the birthmark of Figure 9-15.

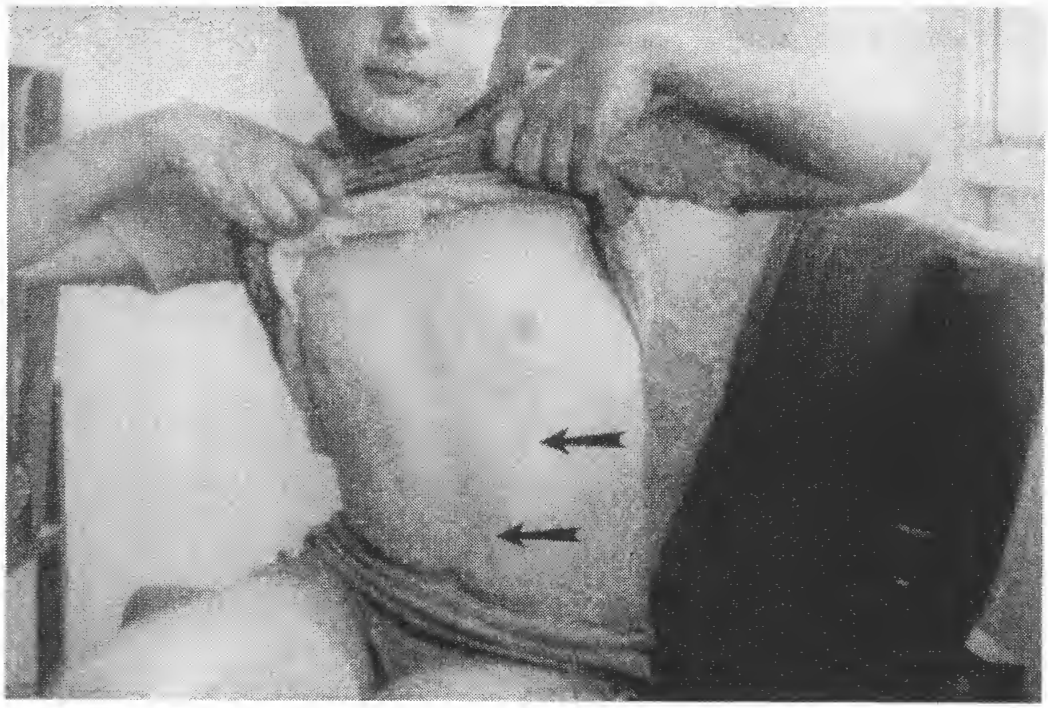

Figure 9-17 Lower chest and abdomen of Yusuf Güven as they appeared in June 1984, when he was almost 9 years old. The arrows point to a faintly visible linear birthmark at the costal margin inferior to the left nipple, and to a second, smaller, round birthmark at about the 1 o'clock position superior to the umbilicus. Both these birthmarks were hyperpigmented macules.

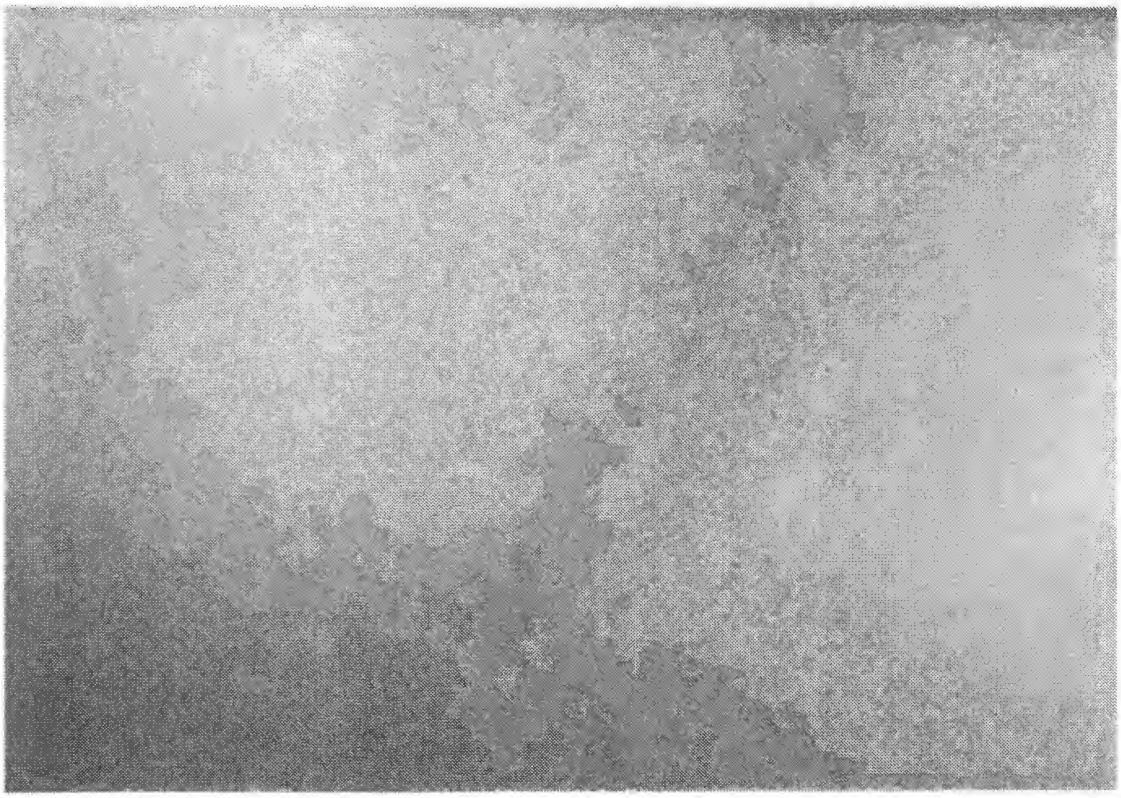

Figure 9-18 Close-up photograph of the linear birthmark on the lower left chest of Yusuf Güven. Yusuf said this birthmark corresponded to a stab wound. It was 6-8 centimeters long and 0.5 centimeters wide at its widest.

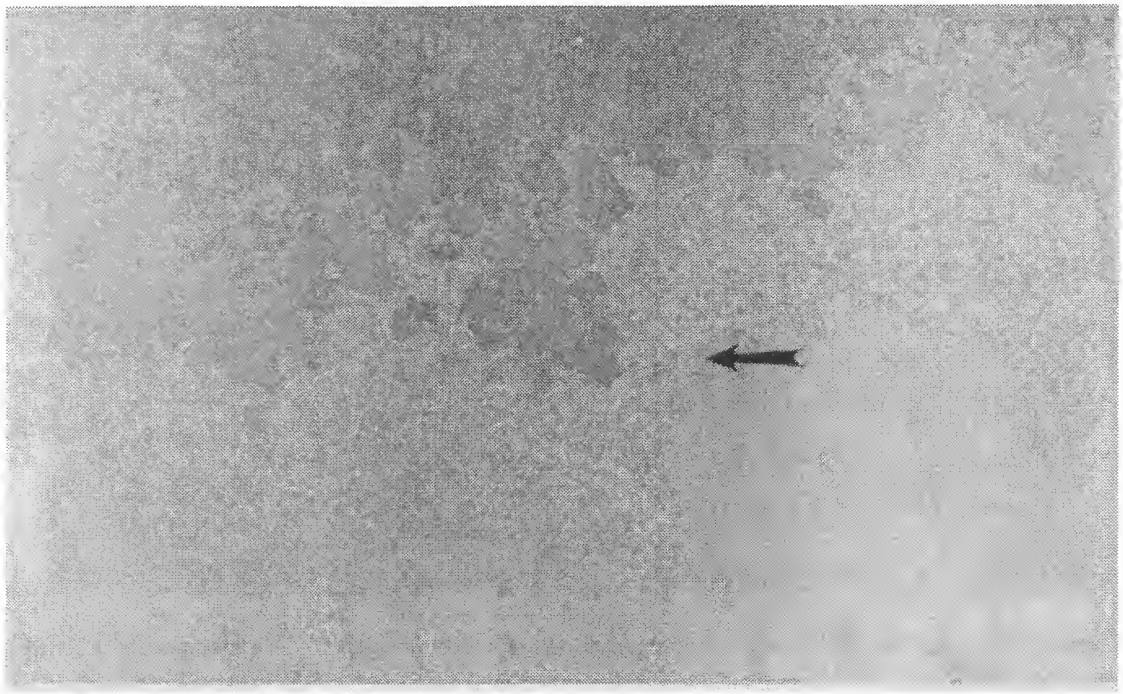

Figure 9-19 Close-up photograph of the round hyperpigmented macule on Yusuf Güven's abdomen. Yusuf said this birthmark corresponded to a bullet wound. It was about 1.5 centimeters in diameter.

Comment

The lack of verification of Yusuf's statements and his volunteering information about his own case may suggest that, in order to explain his birthmarks, he imagined the history of the grocer called İbrahim who was killed in İskenderun. However, he did not make up his statements *ad hoc* for Dr. Polat, because his mother corroborated that he had made them earlier when he was just beginning to speak.

If we accept Yusuf's statements as correct for the origin of the birthmarks, they show how three birthmarks that are similar, or nearly so, in their dermatological features can correspond to three wounds each made with a different weapon.

For the forensic applications that may develop from these researches, it is worth noting that the previous personality could not have been struck on the side of the chest in the region of his axilla unless he had his left arm raised, as Yusuf has his raised in Figure 9-15. This suggests that İbrahim the grocer, if he existed, was preparing to hit one of his assailants when they hit him.

Yusuf's Later Development

When Dr. Polat met Yusuf's father in 1986, he also saw Yusuf again. Yusuf was then 11 years old. His memories of the previous life were fading.

In the 2 years since Dr. Polat had seen him, Yusuf had gained considerable weight. The birthmarks on the front of his chest and abdomen were no longer visible and that on the left chest had become paler. These changes thwarted my hope that we might obtain better photographs of the birthmarks.

THE CASE OF U PO THWAI

U Po Thwai was born in Thamaungchaung village, Dedaye Township (southwest of Rangoon), Burma, on July 17, 1922. His parents were U Hla and his wife, Daw Pwa Khin.

When U Po Thwai was able to speak, as a young child, he told his parents that he was U Po Yee, an itinerant snake-charmer of Taw-ka-mai village, who had been friendly with them. (Taw-ka-mai is 3 kilometers from Thamaungchaung.) He remembered that during one of his roadside shows of snake-charming, one of his snakes had bitten him on the right forefinger. There was then no hospital in Dedaye; friends tried to treat him with the traditional medicines, but he died the next day.

U Win Maung learned about U Po Thwai's case, from an acquaintance, in 1978, and he met and interviewed him in September 1978. In the following year, he and I had another interview with U Po Thwai on April 4, 1979. Both interviews took place at the Shwedagon Pagoda in Rangoon, where U Po Thwai was working as a security guard.

By the time of our interviews, U Po Thwai was 56 years old. Both his parents had died, and there was no possibility of corroborating or verifying his statements. His case derives its interest almost exclusively from the large birthmark on his back. Even though we could not interview his parents, I have no reason to doubt that he had this mark from birth on.

U Po Thwai's Behavior Related to the Previous Life

Phobias of snakes occur commonly among subjects who remember previous lives that ended after a snakebite. Among 23 cases that my colleagues and I have investigated—6 reported in this work—9 of the subjects (39%) had a phobia of snakes.

U Po Thwai—I remind readers that we have only his account of his case—started life with a philia of snakes. As a young child he used to catch small snakes and play snake-charmer with them. He remembered that he was once taken to a pagoda in Rangoon where there were donation boxes in the shapes of animals, including one in that of a cobra. To the amusement of onlookers the young Maung Po Thwai (as he then was) went to this artifactual snake and, kneeling before it, began to play snake-charmer in front of it.

In his youth, between the ages of 16 and 18, U Po Thwai underwent a complete reversal in his attitude toward snakes. He became intensely afraid of them. His fear was extremely irrational, and he acknowledged that he hallucinated snakes in flooded fields when there were none present. He still had a phobia of snakes in his middle 50s when we met him.

U Po Thwai's Birthmarks

U Po Thwai said that he had a birthmark on his right forefinger and that the finger was slightly misshapen. He attributed these abnormalities to the snakebite of the previous life. (He said he was left-handed and that U Po Yee had been right-handed.) I examined, sketched, and photographed his fingers. His right forefinger was slightly flexed at the distal phalanx, and I noted a small linear depression on the dorsal surface of the same phalanx. These birthmarks seemed negligible, however, and I cannot even see the birthmark in the photographs I took.

U Po Thwai had a much more prominent birthmark on his back (Figure 9-20). It was an extensive nevus flammeus extending across his entire back on the left side. It had two large areas separated by a smaller area of normal skin. U Po Thwai said that this birthmark corresponded to a tattoo on the back of U Po Yee. The tattoo design was that of a *garuda*, which is a mythical bird of southeast Asia. Garudas are credited with being enemies of snakes, and it would be appropriate for a snake-charmer to have a tattoo of a garuda. When I first looked at U Po Thwai's birthmark, I had forgotten that U Win Maung's notes of his 1978 interview stated that the birthmark was said to correspond to the tattoo design of a garuda; and I conjectured that the two large hyperpigmented areas shown in Figure 9-20 might represent the wings of an eagle.

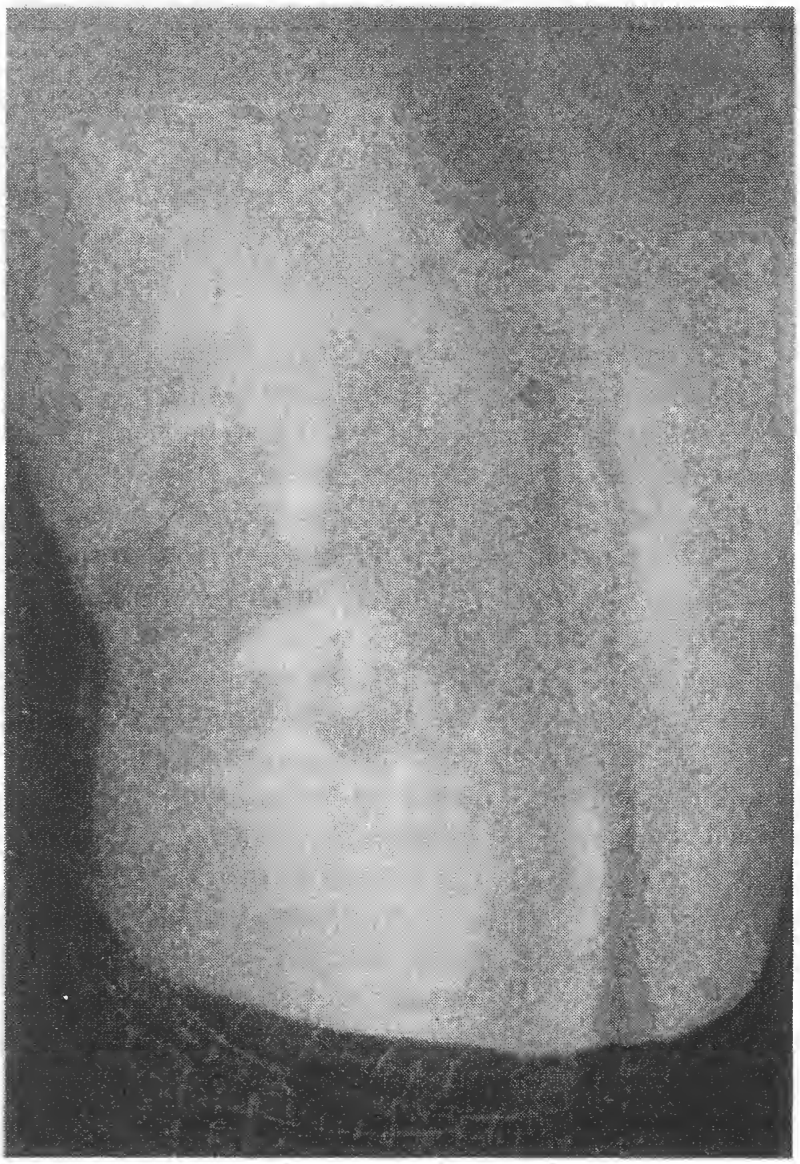

Figure 9-20 Birthmark on U Po Thwai's lower back as it appeared in April 1979, when he was nearly 57 years old. The birthmark was an extensive nevus flammeus of irregular margins extending (except for the intermediate area of normal skin) entirely across the left lower back.

THE CASE OF SANJEEV SHARMA

Summary of the Case and Its Investigation

Sanjeev Sharma was born in Delhi, India, on May 4, 1970. His parents were Satyapal Sharma and his wife, Sita Rani. Sanjeev was their second son and fourth and youngest child. At the time the case developed, Satyapal Sharma was an assistant subinspector of police. Sita Rani also worked, as an employee in a handicrafts shop.

Satyapal's maternal grandmother, Kirpa Devi, had lived with him for about a year before she died (in 1969), and she had predicted that she would be reborn in his family. After Kirpa Devi's death two members of the family had dreams that increased expectations that she would be born into the family again. When Sanjeev was born, he was almost immediately found to have two white hairs growing on his left cheek (Figure 9-21). At the same site Kirpa Devi had had an elevated, hairy nevus that also had two white hairs growing from it (Figure 9-22).

Sanjeev began to speak when he was about 1 year old, and soon afterward he started saying that he was from Ropar (where Kirpa Devi had lived for 20 years before moving in with Satyapal and his family), and he asked to be taken there. He made a few other statements about the previous life.

Sanjeev's family resisted taking him to Ropar for several years, but eventually his paternal grandmother (Kirpa Devi's daughter) took him there early in 1975, when he was nearly 5 years old. In Ropar Sanjeev seemed to be happy, and he moved around freely in the streets, as if they were familiar to him. However, he made no clearcut recognition of any person there, and no informant claimed that he did. One informant credited him with recognizing the way to a temple and a barbershop, but another said that he had not done this unaided.

After Sanjeev's visit to Ropar, a report of the case appeared in a newspaper, and we learned of it in this way in the summer of 1975. Contrary to our usual procedure of beginning an investigation with the subject and his family, Dr. Satwant Pasricha first interviewed (in September 1975) three informants of Ropar who had been present when Sanjeev came there and who had met him. Later in the same year (on October 5, 1975), Dr. Pasricha and I met Sanjeev and also interviewed two members of his family, in Delhi. In October 1976, we resumed work on the case and interviewed Sanjeev's parents (whom we had not met in 1975) and one of his paternal aunts, whom we had also not met previously.

After the foregoing investigations, we made three further visits to Sanjeev and his family. In 1979 Dr. Pasricha and I went together. In 1984 she met them by herself, as she did again in 1989. In October 1989 she met Sanjeev and his parents at a new home, still in Delhi, to which they had moved since the previous interviews.

Persons Interviewed during the Investigation

In Ropar, Punjab, Dr. Pasricha interviewed:

Tarawati, former neighbor of Kirpa Devi
Veena, Tarawati's daughter
Harbans Kaur, friend of Kirpa Devi

In Delhi we interviewed:

Sanjeev Sharma
Satyapal Sharma, Kirpa Devi's grandson and Sanjeev's father
Sita Rani, Sanjeev's mother

Figure 9-21 Photograph of Sanjeev's left cheek as it appeared in October 1975, when he was 5½ years old. The photograph shows one of the white hairs growing from the cheek. It is just above the end of the object being used to indicate it. In contrast, the hair of Sanjeev's eyelashes and of the top of his head is black.

Ram Piyari, Kirpa Devi's daughter and Sanjeev's paternal grandmother
Rajesh, Sanjeev's older brother
Sudesh, Sanjeev's paternal aunt

Both of Sanjeev's parents were employed, and this probably accounts for our learning most about his statements concerning the previous life from his paternal grandmother. She may also have taken more interest in the case than did either of his parents; she went with him to Ropar, but they did not.

Figure 9-22 Photograph of Kirpa Devi taken near the end of her life, when she was in her 90s. She is in the center. A pigmented nevus can be seen on her left cheek near her left nostril. The photograph does not show the white hairs growing from the nevus. The white hair of her head can be seen just beneath her sari. The young boy on the left was her grandson, Rajesh (one of our informants).

When we meet a subject as young as Sanjeev was in 1975, we usually try to talk with him directly about whatever he then seems still to remember about the previous life. We did not talk with Sanjeev in either 1975 or 1976. In 1976 I noted that he was too shy to talk with us (although we could see that a part of him seemed to wish to do so), and possibly the same reason accounts for our not talking with him in 1975. (However, Sanjeev cooperated most agreeably both in 1975 and in 1976, when we examined his cheeks and photographed him.) In the later interviews of 1979 and 1984, he did talk with us and affably.

The Life, Death, and Character of Kirpa Devi

When Kirpa Devi died, she was said to be more than 100 years old. This is credible, judging from our estimate of the age in 1975 of her daughter, Ram

Piyari, and from the photograph of Figure 9-22, which was taken in 1969, the year she died, although legend might have made her a little older than she was. I shall say, however, that she was born in the late 1860s, perhaps in 1868. Her birthplace was a village in the Gujranwala District of western Punjab. Her family were Brahmins. Kirpa Devi married Ganesh Das and had two children, a son, Mool Chand (who had died before 1975), and a daughter, Ram Piyari. Ganesh Das died when Ram Piyari was still young, so that Kirpa Devi was a widow for perhaps 50 years of a long life.

She was nearly 80 when India was partitioned at the time of its independence from Great Britain in 1947. This political division shattered the lives of thousands of Hindus and Sikhs who were then living in the western part of Punjab, which became incorporated in Pakistan. She and her family became refugees and dispersed in different localities of the eastern part of Punjab (which India retained) and Delhi. Kirpa Devi settled in Ropar, a town about 250 kilometers north of Delhi. She chose Ropar as a place to settle because some friends and neighbors of her home in western Punjab were settling there after partition. Her oldest grandson, Banarsidas, lived in Ropar until 1950, when he moved to Delhi. A nephew supported her, and neighbors helped her with chores. She managed fairly well, living alone, for nearly 20 years. She kept in touch with her daughter, Ram Piyari, who had settled in Delhi in 1950 and who had, then or later, joined the household of her son Satyapal.

When Kirpa Devi was in her late 90s, she injured her leg in an accident. With treatment in Ropar and Delhi she recovered in about 6 months. It seemed best, nevertheless, for her to give up living alone in Ropar, and she joined Ram Piyari and Satyapal (with his family) in Delhi. There she died about a year later of "old age" on October 24, 1969.

During her year in Delhi, Kirpa Devi became enfeebled and needed her family's care. She said to Satyapal, apparently on more than one occasion and at least once when Ram Piyari was present: "You are taking so much care of me and are looking after me so well, I will come to you again" (meaning after her death). She blessed Satyapal and said that he would have a son. Later, Satyapal did not consider this reference to a son to be an explicit promise by Kirpa Devi that *she* would be reborn as his son. Sons are valued much more than daughters in India, and a general blessing can easily include a hope that the person being blessed would have a son, even if, like Satyapal, he already had one. Although Satyapal was not her oldest grandson (he was her third), he appears to have been her favorite.

Kirpa Devi's family venerated her as an unusually pious person. She went on pilgrimages to holy places of Hinduism. However, Tarawati, her neighbor in Ropar, discounted Kirpa Devi's reputation in this respect and said that "she was not all that pious." She said that Kirpa Devi (when in Ropar) had lived on alms—presumably what friends, neighbors, and perhaps family members would give her.

Kirpa Devi smoked *bidis* (the standard Indian type of cigarette), and although fewer women than men smoke bidis, it is not considered an indicator of

masculinity in a woman. She smoked a hookah for a time, but that was on medical advice. She appears to have had no obvious masculine characteristics.

Note about the Interval between Kirpa Devi's Death and Sanjeev's Birth. I have taken the date of Sanjeev's birth (May 4, 1970) from a written family record that we examined. We accepted Ram Piyari's memory that her mother had died on October 24, 1969. Sanjeev was born at the end of a full-term pregnancy, and, if we follow the dates given, Sita Rani must have been about 3 months pregnant when Kirpa Devi died.

However, these dates do not accord with other memories our informants had. For example, Ram Piyari and Sita Rani both said that Sita Rani was 8 days pregnant when Kirpa Devi died. Satyapal recalled that Sita Rani conceived *after* Kirpa Devi's death, perhaps as long as 1 or 2 months after it.

I cannot resolve these discrepancies. The written record of Sanjeev's birth is probably correct. Ram Piyari may have postdated her mother's death by 1 or 2 months. (Yet urban Indian women are usually accurate in remembering the dates of deaths of close relatives.)

Three Dreams about Kirpa Devi after Her Death

Ram Piyari told us that about 1 month after her mother's death she dreamed that her mother was offering her some food. She thought this was a bowl of milk or rice, but was not certain about this. She does not appear to have given it any significance at the time, and yet she considered it worth narrating to us later.

Sita Rani told us that her older son, Rajesh, dreamed the day after Kirpa Devi's death that she was saying to him: "I have no other place to go and come back." Ram Piyari remembered hearing about Rajesh's dream, but when we asked Rajesh himself about it, he could not remember having dreamed of his great-grandmother after her death.

In 1984 Sita Rani told Dr. Pasricha about a dream that she herself had within a few days or weeks of Kirpa Devi's death. In the dream, Kirpa Devi was running after Sita Rani trying to catch her. Sita Rani tried to run away, because she regarded Kirpa Devi as dead, but Kirpa Devi caught her anyway. As I mentioned, Kirpa Devi had injured her leg not long before she moved in with Satyapal's family in Delhi, and she had some lameness afterward; but Sita Rani noted that in the dream Kirpa Devi was running as if nothing was wrong with her leg.

Comment. I do not know why Sita Rani did not tell us about this dream during the fairly long interview we had with her in 1976. There is no reason to think that she later invented the dream to please us, and I think it is one more example of an informant later remembering some item of information that was earlier forgotten.

Statements and a Recognition Made by Sanjeev

Among subjects of these cases who had made statements about a previous life, Sanjeev would be in the lower part of the range with regard to the number of

different statements he made. From all the informants together, but chiefly from Ram Piyari, we learned of only nine statements that he had made about the previous life and of only one recognition with which he was credited (Table 9-1).

Sanjeev never spoke about how Kirpa Devi died or about experiences after her death and before his birth.

As I mentioned earlier, no one claimed that Sanjeev had made any definite recognitions of persons on his single visit to Ropar. Ram Piyari thought that Sanjeev had been unexpectedly affectionate when he first met Tarawati, Kirpa Devi's helping neighbor, and with Harbans Kaur, one of Kirpa Devi's friends. Harbans Kaur agreed with this appraisal, but Tarawati did not. She thought Sanjeev had behaved in her presence like any child of his age.

Harbans Kaur said that in Ropar Sanjeev had found his way unaided to a temple and to a barbershop, but Ram Piyari did not confirm this, and so I have not included this claim in Table 9-1.

Ram Piyari later regretted that they had not taken Sanjeev to Ropar sooner; he had been clamoring to go there since he was 1 year old. She thought that he might have made some recognitions at a younger age. The house where Kirpa Devi had lived had undergone some alterations since she had left it. Other conditions for the visit were also unsatisfactory; the group arrived in the late evening, stayed only one night, and left early the next day because Ram Piyari had a fever.

Sanjeev's Behavior Related to the Previous Life

Circumstances and Manner of Sanjeev's Speaking about the Previous Life. Sanjeev began referring to the previous life when he was younger than most subjects of these cases are when they first do this. He was barely 1 year old and at first mispronounced "Ropar" as "Popar." Sita Rani thought that his first reference to the previous life occurred when his paternal aunt Sudesh asked him: "Where did you come from?" He replied: "I was in Ropar."

Some of Sanjeev's later references occurred when he compared his situation with a similar one that he remembered in the previous life. For example, when his mother bought him a new coat, Ram Piyari commented that his mother was buying him good clothes. Sanjeev said: "I got good clothes for you when I was your mother." On another occasion (or perhaps on more than one occasion) Sanjeev asked his grandmother to feed him, and she said that he was grown up and could feed himself. To this Sanjeev replied: "Did I not feed you when you were young and I was your mother?"

Satyapal said that sometimes Sanjeev would answer questions about the previous life. At other times, as in the examples of the preceding paragraph, he would speak about it spontaneously.

Sanjeev was particularly insistent on being taken to Ropar. He asked different persons to take him there. Whenever Ram Piyari's oldest son, Banarsidas, who had lived in Ropar, would visit the family, Sanjeev would say to him: "Take me to

Table 9-1 **Summary of Statements and a Recognition Made by Sanjeev**

Item	*Informants*	*Verification*	*Comments*
1. He[a] used to live in Ropar.	Ram Piyari, Sanjeev's paternal grandmother Sita Rani, Sanjeev's mother	Ram Piyari	
2. He had a house there [in Ropar].	Ram Piyari	Tarawati, Kirpa Devi's former neighbor in Ropar	
3. His Tara was there [in Ropar].	Ram Piyari	Ram Piyari Tarawati	
4. He had Satyapal and Mangaldev.	Ram Piyari	Satyapal Sharma, Kirpa Devi's grandson Sudesh, Sanjeev's paternal aunt	The words *he had* were understood to mean "his children were called." Satyapal and Mangeldev were two of Kirpa Devi's grandsons.
5. Mangeldev lived in Gonda.	Ram Piyari	Not fully correct	Mangeldev lived at a place called Shahdera. Gonda is in the area of Shahdera, but Mangeldev did not live in Gonda itself.
6. His daughter was called Ram Piyari.	Ram Piyari	Ram Piyari	
7. He used to give his daughter good clothes.	Ram Piyari	See comment	Kirpa Devi would certainly have given her daughter clothes to wear, at least when she was a child. To what extent these were "good," we did not learn.

8. He used to smoke a hookah.	Ram Piyari Sita Rani	Ram Piyari	Ram Piyari said that when Kirpa Devi developed some trouble with her eyes, a physician—presumably Ayurvedic—recommended smoking a hookah as likely to help this condition, and so she smoked one.
9. He used to smoke bidis.	Ram Piyari	Satyapal Sharma	
10. Recognition of Kirpa Devi's sacred threads	Ram Piyari		Ram Piyari tested Sanjeev by showing him Kirpa Devi's sacred threads and saying they might as well be thrown away. Sanjeev said: "Don't throw them away. They are mine." The "sacred threads" were those habitually worn by Brahmins.

[a]Although I have used the masculine pronoun for Sanjeev's statements, readers should remember that he was referring to the life of a woman. For consistency, I have also modified Sanjeev's tenses, putting some of his statements into the past tense, even when he had used the present tense.

Ropar." Sometimes he would weep when asking to go to Ropar. He never seems to have said why he wanted to go there, but his father conjectured that he may have wished to be again with Kirpa Devi's friends in Ropar. Ram Piyari thought that Ropar attracted Sanjeev because Kirpa Devi had lived there for many years, and it was familiar to her.

As have other subjects of these cases, Sanjeev made some of his statements in the present tense. For example, he would say: "Ram Piyari *is* my daughter," "I *am* from Ropar," and "My house *is* there" (meaning in Ropar). Sometimes he used the past tense, however, and some of his statements showed that he could distinguish the present from the past. Satyapal once heard him say to Ram Piyari: "Once you were my daughter. Now I am your son." (His correct relationship to her was that of grandson.)

Hindi is a language (like French and some others) in which a speaker uses some different verb forms according to the speaker's sex. On at least some occasions Sanjeev used the verb form a female speaker of Hindi uses. I do not think he can have done this often, because his father was not aware that he had ever done it.

Sanjeev's Interest in Bidis. No one in Sanjeev's family smoked tobacco, but if he happened to see someone else pass by smoking a bidi, he would say: "Get me a bidi also." His father said that Sanjeev was between 1½ and 2 years of age when he first asked for bidis; and he was still asking for them when we first met him, at which time he was 5½ years old.

Sanjeev's Precocious Interest in Religion. In 1975 Ram Piyari considered Sanjeev to have an above average interest in religion. She illustrated this by mentioning that on his way to school he would stop at a temple and offer prayers. When we talked with Ram Piyari again in 1976, she mentioned that when she took Sanjeev for a walk, he would always want to go to the temple. She compared him with his sister Seema (who was 3 years older) and observed that Seema never went to a temple except on Krishna's birthday.

Sanjeev's Old-fashioned Attitudes. Kirpa Devi appears to have had some old-fashioned attitudes. For example, she had objected to the fashion that was spreading among young Indian girls of tying their hair at the back of their heads into two plaits instead of into a single queue. Sanjeev also objected to this new style. When he went to school, his first teacher had adopted the fashion of wearing her hair in two plaits, and Sanjeev made such a fuss about this that he was moved to another section of the class with a different teacher.

At one of our follow-up interviews we learned of another old-fashioned attitude that Sanjeev showed: disapproval of young girls being out of the house unescorted. (In Kirpa Devi's time Hindu women were usually much secluded, before as well as after marriage.)

Sanjeev's Relationships within His Family. Given Sanjeev's memories of having been an old lady in the family, one might have expected him to treat his elders (who were junior to Kirpa Devi) as his equals, if not his inferiors. (Some subjects in a similar situation have done this.) However, Sanjeev was respectful

toward the adults of his family, and I do not think we can call impolite his occasional reminders to Ram Piyari that she had once been in the relationship of daughter to him.

Kirpa Devi had been particularly fond of Sudesh, Sanjeev's youngest paternal aunt. (She was Kirpa Devi's youngest grandchild, and I think she would still have been a young girl when Kirpa Devi died.) Sanjeev was also especially fond of Sudesh, and Ram Piyari thought that he was fonder of Sudesh than of his own mother. Sanjeev was also much attached to Ram Piyari herself.

Sanjeev's Awareness of His Current Situation. In referring to Sanjeev's use of the present tense in talking about the previous life, I gave an example of one statement he made that showed he could distinguish Kirpa Devi's life from his, even though regarding them as linked. I think it worth giving some further examples of ways in which he seemed to be leaving the life of Kirpa Devi behind as he moved forward in his own.

In his use of feminine verb forms he showed at least a trace of identification with the female sex. However, he never asked to wear girls' clothes, and when attempts were made to put a frock on him—perhaps to test him on this matter—he would cry. Ram Piyari said affirmatively that Sanjeev was a boyish boy without any feminine traits.

Kirpa Devi spoke Punjabi, which is certainly a major dialect of Hindi and arguably a separate language, although closely related to Hindi. Punjabi was also spoken in Sanjeev's home. Sanjeev, however, picked up Hindi and seemed to prefer to speak it. Hindi was the language of instruction at his school, but Sanjeev was speaking Hindi before he went to school. In this behavior he showed an identification with the Hindi-speaking children outside his family who were living in his neighborhood of Delhi. He did not differ in this respect from the other children of the family. They all, including Sanjeev, spoke Hindi with their playmates, but spoke Punjabi with their parents (whose mother tongue it was). The important point here is that although Sanjeev had Kirpa Devi's attitude toward girls' hair plaits, he showed flexibility in the matter of language.

Younger persons in Punjab often address old ladies with the word *Bebe*, which literally means grandmother, but may be used in an affectionate way toward any old lady. The younger friends of Kirpa Devi—she could hardly have had any older than she was—addressed her as "Bebe." Occasionally members of Sanjeev's family used this word in talking to him, sometimes teasingly. He objected, saying: "Now I have been born again. Why do you call me 'Bebe'?"

In the light of the examples I have given, it is not surprising that Ram Piyari judged Sanjeev to be more mature than the usual child of his age. She thought this was apparent not only in what he said, but in the tone of his voice.

The Attitude of the Adults in Sanjeev's Family toward His Memories

Ram Piyari believed strongly that Sanjeev was her mother reincarnated. She was probably prepared to think this even before Sanjeev had spoken about Kirpa

Devi's life. Indeed she told us that soon after his birth she gave him the sign of the usual Hindu greeting (*Namaste*), with palms and fingers extended and posed together; Sanjeev, she said, responded by making the same gesture to her.

Satyapal also believed that Sanjeev was Kirpa Devi reincarnated. He said that his conviction on this matter derived from Kirpa Devi's prediction that she would return to them, from Sanjeev's birthmark (the white hairs on his left cheek), and from his statements about the previous life. However, Satyapal and his wife had some concern that Sanjeev might be "too drawn into his memories of the previous life." (One of Satyapal's brothers, not he, initiated the newspaper publicity for the case.) They had never taken him again to Ropar, even though he continued to ask to go there.

Comment. Satyapal's concerns were not irrational. Some subjects of these cases have become entrapped by the memories of the previous life and have had difficulty in disengaging themselves from them. Examples of this occurred in the cases of Parmod Sharma, Ma Tin Aung Myo, and Veer Singh, to mention only three. However, Sanjeev, to judge by his statements and behavior, seemed not to belong in this group.

The Attitude of the Informants in Ropar toward the Case

Two of the informants in Ropar were not convinced that Sanjeev was the reincarnation of Kirpa Devi, the third was more accepting of the case. The two skeptics were Tarawati (with whom Sanjeev's party had stayed in Ropar) and her daughter Veena. Tarawati said (of Sanjeev): "He did not recognize anything"; and Veena said: "He did not make any recognitions even in my presence."

The third informant in Ropar, Harbans Kaur, believed that Sanjeev had recognized her, not explicitly, but by his familiar behavior with her. She also thought that Sanjeev had led the way unaided to a temple and also to a barbershop (places known to Kirpa Devi). However, Ram Piyari did not think Sanjeev had led the way to these places. She did say that he had moved around the streets as if he was familiar with the area where they were.

Comment. Like many informants, these three women based their opinions of the case entirely on the feature of recognitions. On this particular occasion, as I mentioned earlier, conditions were unfavorable both for Sanjeev to make recognitions and for adults to appraise them. The party did not arrive until about 9:00 p.m., when it would have been dark, and they left the next morning, because Ram Piyari was ill. Ram Piyari may have been aware of guidance given to Sanjeev—perhaps by herself—of which Harbans Kaur was unaware. Also, the house where Kirpa Devi had lived had been reconstructed since she had left it.

Sanjeev's Birthmark

Figure 9-22 shows the slightly elevated nevus on Kirpa Devi's left cheek, and Figure 9-21 shows the white hairs emerging from the same site in Sanjeev's face. He did not have an elevation of the skin where the hairs emerged from his cheek.

The hairs growing from Kirpa Devi's nevus were prominent. Ram Piyari said that there were two of them and that they were 1 centimeter long. They were white, as were, at the end of her life, all her other hairs.

The white hairs on Sanjeev's cheek were remarkable in two respects. First, they were noticed soon after his birth. I do not know exactly when Sanjeev's white hairs were first noted, but Satyapal and Sudesh both described him as having been born with the white hairs. Second, their whiteness at or soon after Sanjeev's birth contrasted with the other hairs on his head, which were black.

Ram Piyari said that Sanjeev had two white hairs growing from his left cheek (the same number that she remembered Kirpa Devi had had). However, when we examined Sanjeev's cheek in 1975, I saw two white hairs, but Dr. Pasricha saw three. In 1976 we examined Sanjeev's cheek again. We then agreed that we saw four hairs, and I noticed that they had become longer. The longest was then about 8 millimeters long.

Since nevi are sometimes inherited, it was important to learn whether any other member of the family had hairs on their cheeks. Both Ram Piyari and Satyapal said that none had.

Other Observations of Physical Resemblances between Kirpa Devi and Sanjeev

Two persons remarked on a facial resemblance between Kirpa Devi and Sanjeev. Ram Piyari said that when Sita Rani's mother (Sanjeev's maternal grandmother) came to see Sanjeev 12 days after his birth, she spontaneously commented on the facial resemblance between the baby and Kirpa Devi, and said: "She has come back in your family." Ram Piyari did not give her own opinion on any such resemblance, perhaps because she did not consider herself to be as detached an observer as Sita Rani's mother, who was not a member of Kirpa Devi's family, except through her daughter's marriage. However, Sudesh (Sanjeev's paternal aunt) also said that she thought there was a facial resemblance between Kirpa Devi and Sanjeev.

Sanjeev's Later Development

In 1979 Sanjeev was 8 years old and was then in the fourth grade of school, where his performance was average. Sanjeev told us that he still remembered something of the previous life, for example, that he had lived in Ropar and that his grandmother had been his daughter in the previous life. However, he said he was also forgetting many things he had remembered earlier.

He was no longer asking to smoke bidis. He was still somewhat more religious than might be expected of a person of his age. He no longer wished to go to Ropar.

We went over a list of masculine and feminine traits that we sometimes use as a guide in assessing the prominence of traits of the opposite sex. Sanjeev's ratings on this were predominantly masculine, but he also had a few feminine traits.

For example, although he was so much absorbed in cricket that he talked about it in his sleep, we learned that up to 1978 he had also played with dolls. He was also considered more compassionate than males usually are.

In January 1984, when Dr. Pasricha met Sanjeev (without me), he was nearly 14 years old and in the ninth grade at his school.

Ram Piyari said that Sanjeev still talked about the previous life when he was ill.[10]

Sanjeev himself said that he no longer had any memories whatever of the previous life. However, slight behavioral memories of the previous life persisted. For example, Ram Piyari mentioned that he still sometimes used feminine verb forms. And he showed an old-fashioned orthodox Hindu attitude in his disapproval of his older sisters leaving the house unescorted. He was also still intolerant of new fashions in dress.

Ram Piyari said that Sanjeev still had a strong attachment to her and would say to her: "You are my daughter."

In October 1989, when Dr. Pasricha met Sanjeev and his parents for the last time before the completion of this work, he was 19½ years old. He was undergoing training to become a police officer, as his father (who by this time had retired) had been.

Sanjeev's mother, Sita Rani, said that Sanjeev never spoke about the previous life, and she did not know whether he still had some imaged memories of it. Sanjeev said that he "did not remember everything about the previous life, but remembered who he was." (This quotation is from Dr. Pasricha's notes of the interview.) He added that in the dreams he found himself "in the old form," that is, seeming to be in Kirpa Devi's body.

Ram Piyari died in July 1985, and her death affected Sanjeev greatly. At the time of her funeral he showed what appears to have been a behavioral memory from the previous life. He refused—despite much urging from his mother—to perform certain rituals that a grandson would ordinarily perform. A cousin had to be assigned to the part in the ritual that Sanjeev should have assumed. Although Sanjeev never said why he refused to do what he was asked to do, Sita Rani interpreted his behavior as expressing his continuing belief that Ram Piyari was his (Kirpa Devi's) daughter, and a mother would not perform the rituals in question for her daughter.

Sita Rani also told Dr. Pasricha that Sanjeev had not relaxed his severity concerning new fashions against which Kirpa Devi had inveighed.

[10]Several other subjects have talked first or particularly about the previous life when they have been ill. We do not know much about the circumstances and features of the illnesses concerned, but I conjecture that fever may open mental barriers that ordinarily keep memories of previous lives in unconscious levels of the mind. Other examples of the facilitating effect of illness on remembering a previous life occurred in the cases of Ma Mu Mu, Maung Sein Win, Maung Yin Maung, Pratima Saxena, and Vinita Jha.

Comment

This is a long case report if regarded as solely built on a few white hairs on a left cheek that correspond with two on another. These white hairs are the justification for including the case in the present volume instead of in some other. Most of the case's other features are standard ones among cases suggestive of reincarnation in northern India. (It is, however, somewhat exceptional because of the comparative rarity of same-family cases and of sex-change cases in northern India.) The ordinariness of the other features of the case permits me to say once again that cases whose subjects have birthmarks and birth defects do not differ in their other main features from cases whose subjects do not have them.

THE CASE OF MA HLA NGWE

Summary of the Case and Its Investigation

Ma Hla Ngwe was born in Rangoon, Burma, on February 23, 1969. (She was born in a nursing home.) Her parents were Maung Nyan Win and his wife, Ma San Yee. Ma Hla Ngwe was the older of their two children. Maung Nyan Win was employed in clerical work at a government ministry in Rangoon.

Before Ma Hla Ngwe's birth, her father's maternal grandfather, U Tun Wa, dreamed that one of his daughters, Daw Nyunt Tin (who had died in 1967), wished to be reborn in the family. Immediately after Ma Hla Ngwe's birth her mother noticed that she had a birthmark in the right upper quadrant of her abdomen at the same place that Daw Nyunt Tin had had a birthmark (Figure 9-23).

Ma Hla Ngwe began speaking coherently at the age of about 3. At almost the same time she made a few remarks indicating memories of the life of Daw Nyunt Tin, but stopped talking about the previous life when she was about 4. She never made many statements about the previous life, but she showed some unusual behavior that accorded with attitudes and behavior of Daw Nyunt Tin.

U Win Maung learned of this case in 1975 from Ma Hla Ngwe's grandfather, U Tin Shwe. On March 22, 1975, he interviewed U Tin Shwe and his wife, Daw Nyunt Khin (who was a sister of Daw Nyunt Tin), at their home in Rangoon. In 1975 U Win Maung met again with U Tin Shwe to clarify some details of the case. It seemed to warrant further inquiry, and on March 2, 1980, U Win Maung and I went to the family home where we met U Tin Shwe and Daw Nyunt Khin. We also met Daw Nyunt Myint (another surviving sister of Daw Nyunt Tin) and Ma Hla Ngwe's mother, Ma San Yee. We examined Ma Hla Ngwe's birthmark.

Ma Hla Ngwe lived with her parents and grandparents in the home in Rangoon where Daw Nyunt Tin had lived and died. I think that Daw Nyunt Myint, whom we met at this house, was living with members of the family at the time we met.

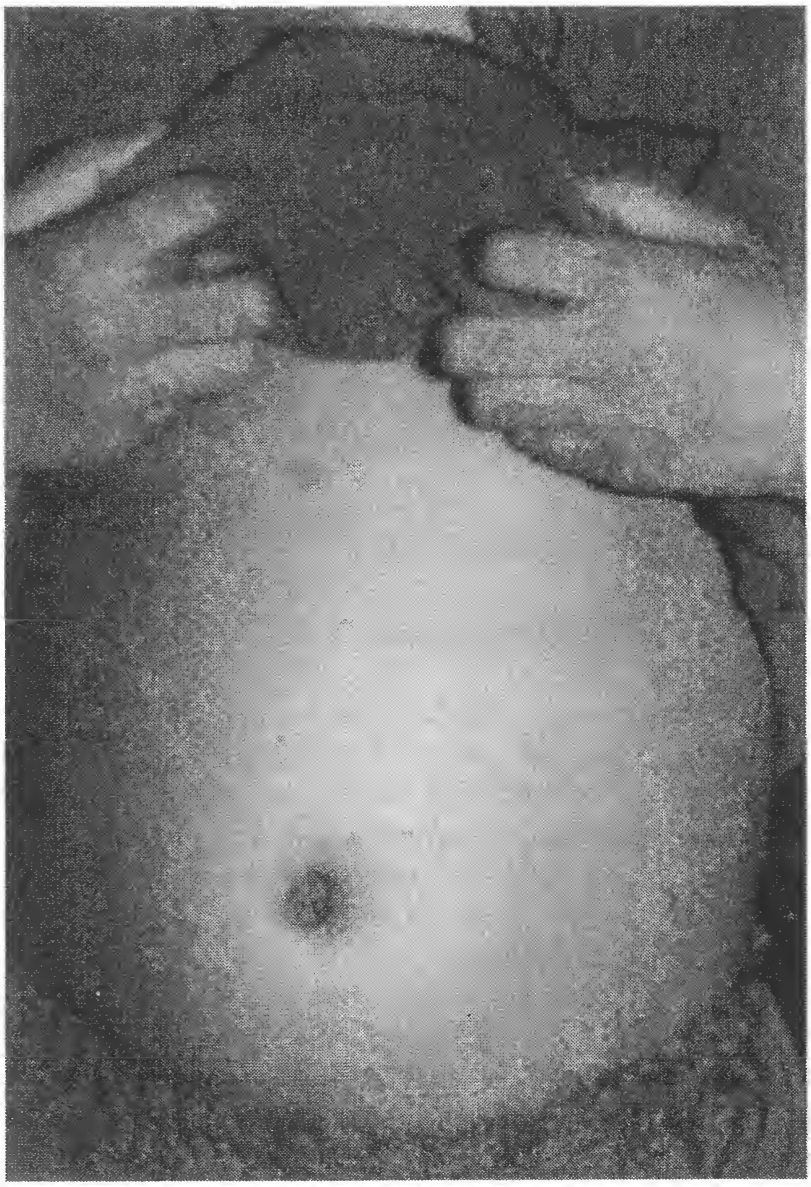

Figure 9-23 Birthmark on the upper abdomen of Ma Hla Ngwe as it appeared in March 1975, when she was 6 years old. The birthmark (located near the midline at the costal margin) was a hyperpigmented macule, ovoid in shape, and about 2 centimeters long and 1 centimeter wide.

The Life, Death, and Character of Daw Nyunt Tin

Daw Nyunt Tin was born in Kawa in Pegu District on April 18, 1913. She was the oldest of three sisters who were the children of U Tun Wa and Daw Saw. She married U Tun Maung, a government officer. I did not learn whether she had any children, but believe that she adopted a son. She died at the family home in Rangoon in 1967, when she was about 54 years old. Her death was attributed to "menstrual troubles," and I did not learn a more precise cause of it.

Daw Nyunt Tin had two younger sisters, Daw Nyunt Khin and Daw Nyunt Myint. She apparently had a quick temper and tended to dominate other members of the family. She was noted also to enjoy good food and did not care how much it cost.

One of her younger sisters, Daw Nyunt Khin, married U Tin Shwe, and for a reason I did not learn, Daw Nyunt Tin did not get along well with her brother-in-law. (Maung Nyan Win was the son of U Tin Shwe and Daw Nyunt Khin, so that Daw Nyunt Tin was Ma Hla Ngwe's great-aunt on her father's side.) Daw Nyunt Tin also did not get along well with the younger of her two sisters, Daw Nyunt Myint.

Daw Nyunt Tin's Birthmark. Daw Nyunt Khin and Daw Nyunt Myint said that their sister had a birthmark—a "small black patch"—on her abdomen at the same location as Ma Hla Ngwe's birthmark. U Tin Shwe also saw the birthmark on his sister-in-law's abdomen. He had been helping to care for her during her final illness, and he noticed her birthmark as her body was being moved after she had died. He also was sure that Ma Hla Ngwe's birthmark was at the site of Daw Nyunt Tin's.

The Marking of Daw Nyunt Tin's Body. In Chapter 7 I described an experimental birthmark on Ma Khin Sandi which was said to correspond to a mark made on the wrist of her dead grandmother, of whom Ma Khin Sandi was thought to be the reincarnation. This introduced a subject that I treat in detail, with numerous examples, in Chapter 10. It needs mention again here, however, because Daw Nyunt Tin's body was marked after her death and for the same reason—the hope of recognizing her after she was reborn.

Daw Nyunt Khin said that she had marked Daw Nyunt Tin's body after her death, but could not remember where she had made the mark or with what substance. She thought she had marked her sister's body just above her birthmark. Her younger sister, Daw Nyunt Myint, had a more definite memory of this marking. She said that Daw Nyunt Khin had put the mark just above their sister's birthmark. She also, however, could not clearly remember the substance used in marking the body. One of our informants, whose name I did not note, suggested that it had been chalk. The mark made was described as "faint."

An Announcing Dream

After Daw Nyunt Tin's death her father, U Tun Wa, dreamed that Daw Nyunt Tin was staying in a mango tree beside the family house and told him that she wanted to come back to the family.

U Tun Wa died in 1972, and I have given a secondhand account of the dream as Daw Nyunt Khin told it to us. I do not know when it occurred in relation to Ma San Yee's pregnancy with Ma Hla Ngwe. Ma San Yee said that she did not remember having a dream herself related to Ma Hla Ngwe's birth.

Statements and a Recognition Made by Ma Hla Ngwe

When Ma Hla Ngwe was about 3 years old, she pointed to a photograph of Daw Nyunt Tin that was hanging on the wall and said that it was of her. She said

that she had two sisters and one adopted son, but she did not give their names. She said that she was the oldest of the three sisters.

We remain in doubt about whether Ma Hla Ngwe stated the name of Daw Nyunt Tin. In 1975 U Tin Shwe and Daw Nyunt Khin told U Win Maung that Ma Hla Ngwe had said that she was "Ma Nyunt Tin," but in 1980 Daw Nyunt Khin said that Ma Hla Ngwe had not given the name.

Ma Hla Ngwe's Behavior Related to the Previous Life

Ma Hla Ngwe's Manner of Addressing Older Persons. Ma Hla Ngwe showed an attitude of equality, even at times of superiority, toward Daw Nyunt Tin's sisters and brother-in-law. These persons were, for Ma Hla Ngwe, her grandparents and great-aunt. She called her grandmother "Ma Nyunt Khin," just as Daw Nyunt Tin had done. She addressed the younger of Daw Nyunt Tin's sisters, Daw Nyunt Myint, as "Ah Pu," the nickname by which Daw Nyunt Tin had addressed her. However, she was more respectful to her great-aunt than to her grandparents. All these attitudes would fluctuate in intensity. Occasionally they would reach a peak when Ma Hla Ngwe would say: "I am the eldest. I know everything."

Daw Nyunt Myint told us that she did not have a good relationship with Daw Nyunt Tin, and she also found that she did not get along well with Ma Hla Ngwe.

Ma Hla Ngwe adopted a particularly superior, and at times openly impolite, attitude toward her grandfather U Tin Shwe, with whom Daw Nyunt Tin had had a poor relationship. She called him "Maung Tin Shwe" or even "Ko Tin Shwe," not even giving him the senior male honorific "U," let alone calling him "Grandfather" or "Grandpa." U Win Maung witnessed in 1975 how rude Ma Hla Ngwe could be toward her grandfather. As U Win Maung was leaving the house and U Tin Shwe prepared to accompany him to the bus-stop, Ma Hla Ngwe suddenly said: "Maung Tin Shwe, you go now and don't come back!"

Other Behavior of Ma Hla Ngwe Related to the Previous Life. Ma Hla Ngwe liked good food and was careless about its cost, as Daw Nyunt Tin had been. She gave orders in a manner reminiscent of Daw Nyunt Tin. She was also observed to have a quick temper, as Daw Nyunt Tin had had.

Comment. Quickness of temper is a trait subsumed under the word *temperament*. Informants for other cases have sometimes commented on a similarity between the subject of a case and the concerned previous personality in some quality of temperament. Quickness of temper (or its opposite, placidity) is one of the traits of temperament most often mentioned.[11]

[11]Other cases in which quickness of temper was noted in both subject and previous personality include those of Imad Elawar and Disna Samarasinghe.

Ma Hla Ngwe's Birthmark

Figure 9-23 shows that Ma Hla Ngwe's birthmark was a hyperpigmented macule in the right upper quadrant of the abdomen. It was ovoid and about 2 centimeters long and 1 centimeter wide.

Ma San Yee said that she noticed the birthmark immediately after Ma Hla Ngwe's birth. It had not changed in location or appearance since her birth; nor had it changed in size, except as would be expected with the growth of her body.

Daw Nyunt Myint said that Daw Nyunt Tin's birthmark had been slightly larger than Ma Hla Ngwe's. Daw Nyunt Khin, Daw Nyunt Myint, and U Tin Shwe all said that Ma Hla Ngwe's birthmark was at the same location as Daw Nyunt Tin's.

I examined Ma Hla Ngwe's abdomen in 1980, but could see no trace of a second birthmark (other than the one in Figure 9-23) that might have corresponded to a mark made on Daw Nyunt Tin's body after her death.

Other Relevant Information. U Tin Shwe, Daw Nyunt Khin, Daw Nyunt Myint, Maung Nyan Win, and Ma San Yee all said that no other member of the family (apart from Daw Nyunt Tin and Ma Hla Ngwe) had a birthmark at the site of theirs. Ma Hla Ngwe's younger brother, Maung Tin Aung Win (a 5-year-old boy), was present at the family's home in 1980, and we examined his abdomen; he had no birthmark there.

Comment

This case has the contaminating feature that the body of Daw Nyunt Tin was marked after her death, and probably at a place close to her existing birthmark. Under these circumstances we cannot say positively that Ma Hla Ngwe's birthmark corresponds to Daw Nyunt Tin's birthmark instead of to the experimental mark. Since the artifactual mark and the birthmark were nearly at the same location, we can perhaps conceive that Ma Hla Ngwe's birthmark may derive from a kind of merger between the congenital mark and the experimental mark on Daw Nyunt Tin's abdomen.

THE CASE OF CEMAL KURT

Summary of the Case and Its Investigation

Cemal Kurt was born in Yenice, near Tarsus, Turkey, in 1961. His parents were Coşkun Kurt and his wife, Bahriye. They were cousins. They were Alevis, but unlike the majority of Alevis in south central Turkey, they were Turks, not Arabs.

Before Cemal's birth a neighbor had a dream which was taken to indicate that a distant relative of the Kurts, Cemal Karacan, would be reborn in their family. Accordingly, his parents gave Cemal the name of this relative. Cemal had a

prominent birthmark on his left forearm, but his parents only learned later that Cemal Karacan had had a similar birthmark.

When Cemal was about 2 years old, he began to speak and soon started saying that he owned a vineyard. He made a few other statements about a previous life and some recognitions that I shall describe later. The sons of Cemal Karacan accepted him as their father reborn when he was not yet 5 and then began a habit of addressing him as "Father."

Reşat Bayer learned of this case in April 1975, and he had one interview with Cemal Karacan's widow, Elif; however, he did not meet Cemal Kurt at that time. In September 1975, he and I were in Yenice, and we met Cemal Kurt and also Cemal's mother, Bahriye. She became our main informant for the case. In 1976 Reşat Bayer met her (and also Cemal Kurt) again and obtained some additional information.

After Reşat Bayer's sudden death in 1977, Ertan Kura made several trips of investigation to south central Turkey on my behalf. In 1981 he worked on the present case in Yenice. In addition to interviewing both of Cemal's parents he also met and interviewed three of Cemal Karacan's sons. In his report of these interviews to me Ertan Kura gave the names of his informants, but did not always separate their different testimonies. Accordingly, I am uncertain about the name of the individual informant for some details of his report.

In October 1989, Dr. Jürgen Keil improved the precision of some of the information by going to Yenice and there interviewing Şefik Karacan, one of Cemal Karacan's sons.

Relationship between the Two Families

Cemal Karacan was a first cousin of the maternal grandmother of Coşkun Kurt, Cemal's father. In addition, Bahriye Kurt's father was the brother of Coşkun Kurt's maternal grandmother.

Members of the two families were obviously acquainted, but they seem not to have been intimate friends. Bahriye Kurt said that, although she had known Cemal Karacan, she had never seen the birthmark on his arm and did not even know he had had a birthmark when Cemal was born.

The Life and Death of Cemal Karacan

Cemal Karacan was a barber who also did some farm work. He married a woman called Elif, and they had at least three sons, Şefik, Nuri, and Mahir. He lived at Yenice.

He had a mark on his left arm similar to that on Cemal Kurt's left arm. Bahriye Kurt told us she had learned from her mother-in-law, who was Cemal Karacan's cousin, that the mark on his arm was a birthmark, not the scar of an injury. Bahriye had not herself seen Cemal Karacan's mark. Ertan Kura confirmed from Cemal Karacan's sons that their father had a mark on his left arm similar to

that on Cemal Kurt's left arm; but he did not question them about whether the mark on Cemal Karacan was a birthmark.

Dr. Keil did put this question to Şefik Karacan (one of Cemal Karacan's sons), who told him that the mark on his father's arm was a birthmark. Even so, we have no testimony from an informant older than Cemal Karacan himself concerning the congenitality of the mark on his arm.

One day when he was working on a farm he became suddenly ill and died while being taken to a hospital. His death was attributed to heart disease. His son Şefik said that his father died on July 20, 1960, at the age of 60.

Three Dreams Following Cemal Karacan's Death

Şefik Karacan told Dr. Keil that he had a dream after his father died in which his father appeared and said to him: "I will be in Coşkun Kurt's house, tell them they will come out right with their court case." At that time the Kurt family was involved in a legal dispute being argued in court; and in the event the matter was settled in their favor.

Elif Karacan mentioned to Reşat Bayer a dream that she said one of her sons had had. It concerned a legal dispute about money owed by Cemal Karacan. Her account of this dream was secondhand; none of Cemal Karacan's sons mentioned such a dream either to Ertan Kura or to Dr. Keil.

A day before Bahriye Kurt gave birth to Cemal a neighbor dreamed of Cemal Karacan, who said to her a single sentence: "I am going to Coşkun's." As I mentioned, Cemal's parents chose his name on the basis of this dream.[12]

Comment. Şefik said he had his dream 3 years after his father's death, but obviously before Cemal Kurt's birth; this interval is incompatible with that of about 1 year between Cemal Karacan's death and Cemal Kurt's birth that we estimate from other information, and once again we must make allowance for vagueness about dates on the part of some informants.

Statements and Recognitions Made by Cemal

In 1975 Cemal told Reşat Bayer and me that he had never had any imaged memories of a previous life, and he thought his case contained only the single feature of the correspondence between his birthmark and that of Cemal Karacan.

However, Bahriye Kurt said that Cemal had made a few statements about the life of Cemal Karacan when he was a young child. He had said that he was Cemal the barber and that he had owned a vineyard. He had, somewhat vague-

[12]Same-family cases are comparatively rare among the Alevis of south central Turkey. However, a group of six cases occurring in Yenice all had these two features: Both personalities belonged to the same family and someone had an announcing dream. The case of Muhittin Yılmaz belongs to this group of cases from Yenice.

ly, indicated where the vineyard was. He asked to go to Cemal Karacan's house. When asked why he wanted to go there, he said: "Because my wife, Elif, is there."

Bahriye Kurt also said that Cemal had recognized Elif Karacan (Cemal Karacan's widow) by saying: "There is my wife." Ertan Kura obtained a different (or perhaps amplifying) account of Cemal's first meeting with Elif Karacan. She learned about the belief that Cemal was her husband reborn and went to see him. However, when she saw Cemal, she took him in her arms and began crying. The informant for these details did not mention what Cemal Kurt said at this time.

Bahriye Kurt added that Cemal had recognized Cemal Karacan's sister (or one of his sisters) by saying: "There is my sister." I learned no additional details about this recognition.

Şefik Karacan, speaking to Dr. Keil in 1989, concurred that Cemal Kurt had made statements about matters with which his father (Cemal Karacan) had been familiar. According to Şefik, Cemal gave the exact location of Cemal Karacan's farm and the correct number of sheep and cows there. He also gave names of members of Cemal Karacan's family.

Cemal's Behavior Related to the Previous Life

After Cemal met Elif Karacan, he wished to continue seeing her, and Bahriye Kurt said in 1975 that he used to visit her on holidays. She would also come to visit him. When she died, he was much affected, even though by that time he had forgotten the memories he had earlier had of the previous life.

The Attitudes of Cemal Karacan's Sons toward Cemal

As I mentioned, Cemal Karacan's sons (at least the three of them that Ertan Kura met in 1981) regarded Cemal as their father reborn and had addressed him as "Father" when he was only about 5 years old. One of the sons, Nuri Karacan, had been a barber before changing to other work. He had cut Cemal's hair for many years without charging him.

Cemal's Birthmark

Figure 9-24 shows Cemal's birthmark as it appeared when he was about 14 years old. The birthmark was a nevus flammeus, probably formed by proliferated and dilated arterioles. It was irregular in shape and very roughly rectangular, measuring about 4 centimeters in length by 1.5 centimeters in width.

According to Bahriye Kurt, Cemal Kurt and Cemal Karacan were the only members of the family to have the birthmark they had. Şefik Karacan said the same.

Reşat Bayer learned from Bahriye Kurt that she had good health during her pregnancy with Cemal and a normal delivery at his birth. She did not take any drugs or medication during the pregnancy.

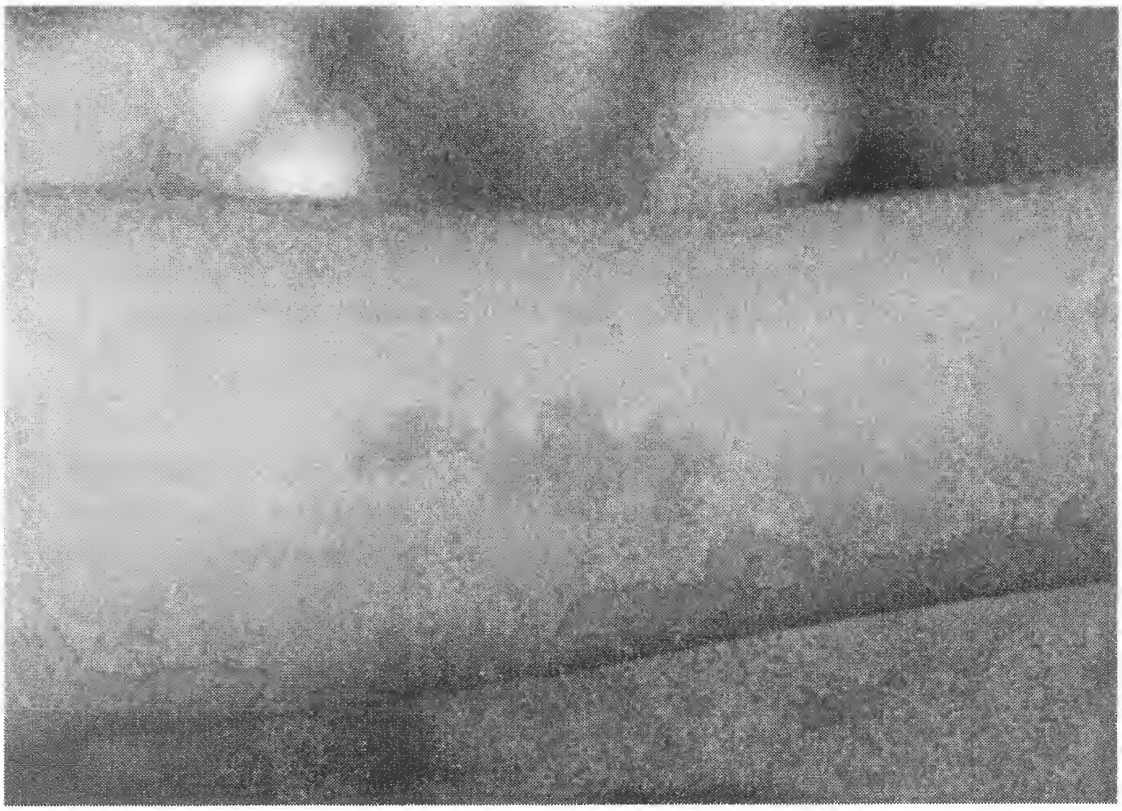

Figure 9-24 Cemal Kurt's birthmark, a nevus flammeus, as it appeared in September 1975 when he was about 14 years old. The birthmark measured about 4 centimeters by 1.5 centimeters.

Comment

Because Cemal's parents were related to Cemal Karacan, we cannot exclude the possibility that the nevus flammeus the two Cemals had was transmitted genetically. The announcing dream of a neighbor influenced Cemal's parents—even though his birthmark did not—to name him after Cemal Karacan. They may later have promoted his identification with Cemal Karacan. Perhaps the sons of Cemal Karacan fell in with this idea and even contributed to it by their respectful attitude toward the young boy of 5 whom they regarded as their father reborn.

THE CASE OF MAUNG SEIN NYUNT

Introduction

This case has three features only: dreams by the subject's mother when she was pregnant that his parents interpreted as indicating a deceased man who was to reincarnate as their child; a birthmark related in size and location to a hyperpigmented macule on this deceased man; and a phobia of water on the part of the

subject corresponding to the mode of the deceased man's death. The subject had no imaged memories of a previous life.

U Win Maung and I learned of this case in 1972 when we were dining at a friend's house in Taunggyi. Maung Sein Nyunt's parents were guests at the same house, and they told us briefly about the case at that time. They agreed to our studying it more formally, but it was 5 years before it came to the top of our list of cases to be investigated in Burma. On March 7, 1977, we were able to meet Maung Sein Nyunt and also to talk further with his parents about the case.

Summary of the Case

Maung Sein Nyunt was born in Insein, Lower Burma, on November 18, 1957. His parents were U Hla Maung and his wife, Daw Mya Mya. He was the third and youngest of their three children. He had two older sisters. U Hla Maung was a prominent lawyer in his community.

U Hla Maung had a younger brother, U Khin Tin, who was born in Arakan, Burma, in 1926. He also became a lawyer. He was a robust young man of about 30 when, on March 30, 1956, he accidentally drowned in a lake in Rangoon. He had been invited to dinner by some friends who lived near the lake. He went to their house and then asked them to wait for a short time while he had a quick swim in the lake. He swam across the lake and on the return passage apparently had cramps and could not keep himself afloat. He called for help, and attempts were made to rescue him; but there were no boats nearby that could be launched into the lake, and U Khin Tin drowned before help came.

About 15 months later, in July 1957, Daw Mya Mya was 5 months pregnant. She was then in Calcutta where she had gone for a minor operation. While there she dreamed on three successive nights that her deceased brother-in-law, U Khin Tin, came and stood at the foot of her bed. The dreams were particularly vivid, and Daw Mya Mya found them somewhat frightening.

She told her husband about the dreams. He interpreted them as indicating that his brother would be reborn as their son. As soon as Maung Sein Nyunt was born, U Hla Maung examined him and found on his left back a large macule that corresponded closely in size and location with a macule that U Khin Tin had had.

Maung Sein Nyunt never spoke about the life of his uncle, and apparently he had no imaged memories of the uncle's life. In his family of orthodox Burmese Buddhists, he would certainly have been allowed to express any memories, if he had had any.

He did have a phobia of water, and this persisted until he was about 15 or 16 years old. At the time U Win Maung and I met him, he was 19½ years old. He said that he was then able to swim, but did not much enjoy doing so.

Maung Sein Nyunt's Attitude as a Baby toward His Mother

When Maung Sein Nyunt was a baby, he cried whenever his mother held him, but was quiet whenever his father held him. This unusual behavior reminded

Figure 9-25 Birthmark on the left upper back of Maung Sein Nyunt as it appeared in March 1977, when he was 19½ years old. The birthmark was an ovoid area of hyperpigmentation that was about 2.5 centimeters wide and 5 centimeters long.

Daw Mya Mya that when she had dreamed of U Khin Tin, she had initially wished that he would not be born in their family. (I did not learn the reason for her reluctance.) Thinking that, if the baby was U Khin Tin reborn, he might be annoyed at her attitude toward him, she held the baby and, speaking aloud, apologized to him and said that he was welcome in their family. After that, Maung Sein Nyunt did not cry when his mother held him. He was then about 8 months old.

Maung Sein Nyunt's Birthmark

Figure 9-25 shows that Maung Sein Nyunt's birthmark was a hyperpigmented macule. It was ovoid in shape and about 2.5 centimeters wide and 5 centimeters long.

Maung Sein Nyunt's parents regarded his birthmark as unique of its type and location in their family apart from the similar one U Khin Tin had had. Referring to themselves, their two daughters, and an uncle and aunt of Maung Sein Nyunt, they said none of these persons had a birthmark similar to those of U Khin Tin and Maung Sein Nyunt.

Comment

Since Maung Sein Nyunt was U Khin Tin's nephew, we cannot exclude inheritance as a factor in the occurrence of his nevus. Without the additional features of Daw Mya Mya's recurrent announcing dreams and Maung Sein Nyunt's phobia of water, I should have attached little importance to Maung Sein Nyunt's birthmark. These additional features, however, permit us to consider reincarnation as an alternative explanation for it.

THE CASE OF DORABETH CROSBY

Introduction

In this case the subject had two birthmarks. One of these corresponded to a hyperpigmented macule and the other to a scar from a wound (which had not been fatal) on the previous personality.

Summary of the Case and Its Investigation

Dorabeth Crosby was born in Wrangell, Alaska, on March 19, 1965. Her parents were John Crosby and his wife, Susan. Dorabeth was the fourth of their six children. The Crosbys were Tlingits. John Crosby was a fisherman. Dorabeth's unusual name derived from a combination of the names of her maternal grandmother, Elizabeth Jackson, and her maternal great-aunt, Elizabeth Jackson's sister, Dorothy Willard.

At or soon after her birth, Dorabeth was noted to have two prominent birthmarks, on her forehead and on her right forearm. These and an announcing dream led to her being identified as the reincarnation of her grandmother's sister, Dorothy Willard, even before she could speak. She was given Dorothy Willard's Tlingit name. Later, she made a few recognitions and associated statements related to the life of Dorothy Willard.

I first learned of the case during a visit to Alaska in May 1972. At that time I interviewed, in Chatham, Dorabeth's mother. I also met Dorabeth there and photographed her birthmarks. Champe Ransom was assisting me during a field trip to Alaska then, and I asked him to obtain additional information about the cases—there were several—in the Crosby family, while I worked on some other cases. He concentrated mainly on the other cases in the Crosby family, but added to our information for Dorabeth's case.

In 1975 I asked Roxanne Turner (who was then assisting me in Alaska) to take up the investigation of the case, and she conducted some additional interviews for it. In 1978 I was again in Wrangell, and I interviewed Dorabeth's father and (much more briefly) another informant for the case, Walter Jackson, who was Dorothy Willard's brother-in-law (and Dorabeth's maternal grandfather).

Persons Interviewed during the Investigation

In Chatham we interviewed:

Susan Crosby, Dorabeth's mother
Margaret Zuboff, Susan Crosby's sister

In Wrangell we interviewed:

Elizabeth Jackson, Dorothy Willard's sister and Susan Crosby's mother
Walter Jackson, Susan Crosby's father
John Crosby, Dorabeth's father

In Alaska, during the summer season of fishing and canning, members of a family often become separated for some time, and this accounts for our interviewing John and Susan Crosby at different times and places.

Although I met Dorabeth twice and photographed her birthmarks, it would be incorrect to say that I interviewed her.

The Life and Death of Dorothy Willard

Dorothy Willard was born in 1897 in Hoonah, Alaska. When she grew up, she married Eddie Smith, and after he died, she married Joseph Willard. She had six children by her two husbands.

She was wounded in the forehead, and a scar remained there. I am uncertain about the cause of this wound. One informant said that it occurred when she was intoxicated with alcohol. Another said that her husband—he did not say which one—cut her on the forehead with a knife when *he* was intoxicated. (These are not incompatible accounts.)

She died in Hoonah on April 12, 1962. Her niece, Dorabeth's mother, said that she had died of food poisoning, but her death certificate (of which we obtained a copy) assigned her death to cardiovascular disease with congestive heart failure. She also had glomerulonephritis.

After her death, Joseph Willard married a second wife. He himself died in 1968.

An Announcing Dream

Susan Crosby gave me a secondhand account of a dream that she said her mother, Elizabeth Jackson, had had. In the dream Dorothy Willard appeared to

Elizabeth (her sister) and said that she was looking for Susan in Wrangell and going to stay with her.

Unfortunately, we failed to obtain Elizabeth Jackson's account of this dream. When Roxanne Turner interviewed her, she did not mention the dream spontaneously, and Roxanne Turner did not ask her a question about it.

Recognitions Made by Dorabeth

Dorabeth seems to have made no statements about the previous life that were not linked to a few recognitions that she made.

Susan Crosby said that Dorabeth recognized some bracelets that had belonged to Dorothy Willard and that Susan was wearing. Dorabeth said that they were hers and added: "When I get big enough, you will give them back to me." Dorabeth also claimed another of Dorothy's bracelets that she saw her (Dorothy's) sister Elizabeth wearing. She would ask Elizabeth: "When are you going to give it to me?" She also asked Susan Crosby to "return" to her dishes that had belonged to Dorothy.

Of persons known to Dorothy, Dorabeth was said to have recognized Sydney Smith, Dorothy's son by her first husband, and Joseph Willard, Dorothy's second husband. However, we did not learn the circumstances in which she recognized these two men.

Dorabeth's Behavior Related to the Previous Life

As I mentioned, Joseph Willard married again after Dorothy Willard's death; his second wife was Mary Blake. Dorabeth showed an intense jealousy toward Mary Blake. She asked her mother: "How come that man [meaning Joseph Willard] is staying with that lady [meaning Mary Blake]?" On at least one occasion, when Dorabeth saw Joseph Willard walking with Mary Blake on the street in Wrangell, she said: "I am going to get him back." Elizabeth Jackson said that once when Joseph Willard, accompanied by his new wife, walked past a place where Dorabeth was playing with some friends, Dorabeth went over to him and said: "What are you doing with that old woman?" If she happened to meet Joseph Willard when he was alone, she would talk politely to him; however, if Mary Blake was present, Dorabeth would show her annoyance. Joseph Willard became aware of Dorabeth's jealousy and sometimes teased her; then he would add that he loved her. When he died in 1968, Dorabeth was affected by the news of his death.

The Attitudes of Dorabeth's Parents toward Her Memories

For somewhat different reasons, neither of Dorabeth's parents found congenial the idea that Dorabeth was the reincarnation of Dorothy Willard. Susan Crosby did not wish her children to have Tlingit names and said there was "too

much trouble over it." (I think the "trouble" to which she referred was the conflict between the traditional religion of the Tlingit, which inculcated the belief in reincarnation, and the formal Christianity to which the family subscribed.) At the same time Susan evidently believed that Dorabeth was the reincarnation of her aunt Dorothy.

Dorabeth's father, John Crosby, shared his wife's conflict between the traditional religion and Christianity. In addition, he had two other reservations about the case. First, he thought that Dorabeth physically resembled his sister Gertrude. And second, he thought that the hyperpigmented macule on Dorabeth's right forearm might be hereditary, because he himself had a small macule near the same location on his right forearm. (I describe these macules in the next section.) At the same time he was open-minded about the belief in reincarnation that he knew to be traditional among the Tlingit people.

Elizabeth Jackson was convinced that Dorabeth was the reincarnation of her sister Dorothy.

Dorabeth's Birthmarks

Figure 9-26 shows the birthmark on Dorabeth's forehead. It was a puckered scarlike area almost in the midline of her forehead. It was oval in shape and about 1.5 centimeters long and 1 centimeter wide.

Figure 9-27 shows the hyperpigmented macule on Dorabeth's right forearm. It was round and about 3 millimeters in diameter.

I examined the right forearms of Susan Crosby and four of the other children of the family; none of them had hyperpigmented macules like Dorabeth's. Susan Crosby said that no other member of the family had a birthmark on the right forearm like Dorabeth's. However, her husband had a small hyperpigmented macule in the same area, and Figure 9-28 shows this faintly. His macule was about 1.5 millimeters in diameter. It had much less pigment than Dorabeth's macule and is barely visible in the photograph.

Both Susan Crosby and her mother, Elizabeth Jackson, said that Dorabeth's two marks—on the forehead and the right forearm—were birthmarks and that they corresponded respectively with a scar on Dorothy's forehead and a macule on her right forearm.

Comment

Because John Crosby had a small macule more or less in the same location as Dorabeth's much larger one on the right forearm, we must consider—and indeed must almost perforce agree—that not one but two genetic components may have entered into the causation of the macule on Dorabeth's right forearm, one from her mother, who was Dorothy Willard's niece, and one from her father.

Figure 9-26 Birthmark on forehead of Dorabeth Crosby as it appeared in May 1972, when she was a little more than 7 years old. The birthmark was a puckered, scarlike area, roughly oval in shape and measuring about 1.5 centimeters by 1 centimeter.

The question remains, however, of why Dorabeth—alone in her family—had a prominent macule on her right forearm. (Her father's was not prominent, as Figure 9-28 shows.)

Figure 9-27 Birthmark on the right forearm of Dorabeth Crosby as it appeared in May 1972, when she was a little more than 7 years old. The birthmark was a hyperpigmented macule, round, and about 3 millimeters in diameter.

Figure 9-28 Birthmark on the right forearm of John Crosby, Dorabeth's father. The birthmark consisted of a small, faintly visible hyperpigmented macule that was about 1.5 millimeters in diameter.

THE CASE OF MAUNG YIN MAUNG

In the preceding five cases the subject and previous personality belonged to the same family. They permit one to ask why, if the location of nevi is inherited, one particular member of a family should have a nevus when other members do not. Nevertheless a genetic component may be in play in these cases. I include the case of Maung Yin Maung as an example of a nevus on a subject that corresponded to a nevus on a deceased person who was not a member of the subject's family.

Because I have presented a detailed report of Maung Yin Maung's case elsewhere, I will here give attention only to the nevus on the back of his neck.

Maung Yin Maung was born in Rangoon, Burma, on August 30, 1960. His parents were U Ba Hein and his wife, Daw Kyin Htein. When he was about 2½ years old, he began—still lisping—to make references to a previous life. He gradually communicated to his parents that he was remembering the life of U Pe Tin, a close friend of his parents. U Pe Tin had been an airplane pilot, and, barely having finished his training, he had crashed in his airplane at the Mingaladon Airport of Rangoon. The airplane had burst into flames before he could be pulled from the wreckage. He was 28 years old.

When Maung Yin Maung was born, his skin was red and covered with small vesicles. This severe dermatitis, which healed after about a month, was attributed to the severe burns that U Pe Tin received when his airplane crashed and caught fire. We are not, however, concerned with this feature of the case in the present chapter.

Maung Yin Maung's Birthmark

Figure 9-29 shows the birthmark on the back of Maung Yin Maung's neck as it appeared in November 1974, when he was 14 years old. It was a dark brown hyperpigmented nevus, about 5 millimeters in diameter and slightly raised above the surrounding skin.

U Ba Hein said that U Pe Tin had had a nevus at exactly the same place on the back of his neck. U Pe Tin's nevus had been slightly bigger than Maung Yin Maung's was. When U Pe Tin was in Rangoon, he had stayed much of the time with his older brother U Htun Hlaing, who was a next-door neighbor of U Ba Hein and Daw Kyin Htein. U Pe Tin became extremely close to U Ba Hein and his family, and he spent as much time, or more, with them than with his own family. He often bathed at U Ba Hein's house, and U Ba Hein said that he had often observed the mole at the back of U Pe Tin's neck.

No other member of Maung Yin Maung's family had a birthmark at the site of his. I examined both his parents, his two older brothers, and his younger sister; and I satisfied myself that this was so, at least for the family members I could observe.

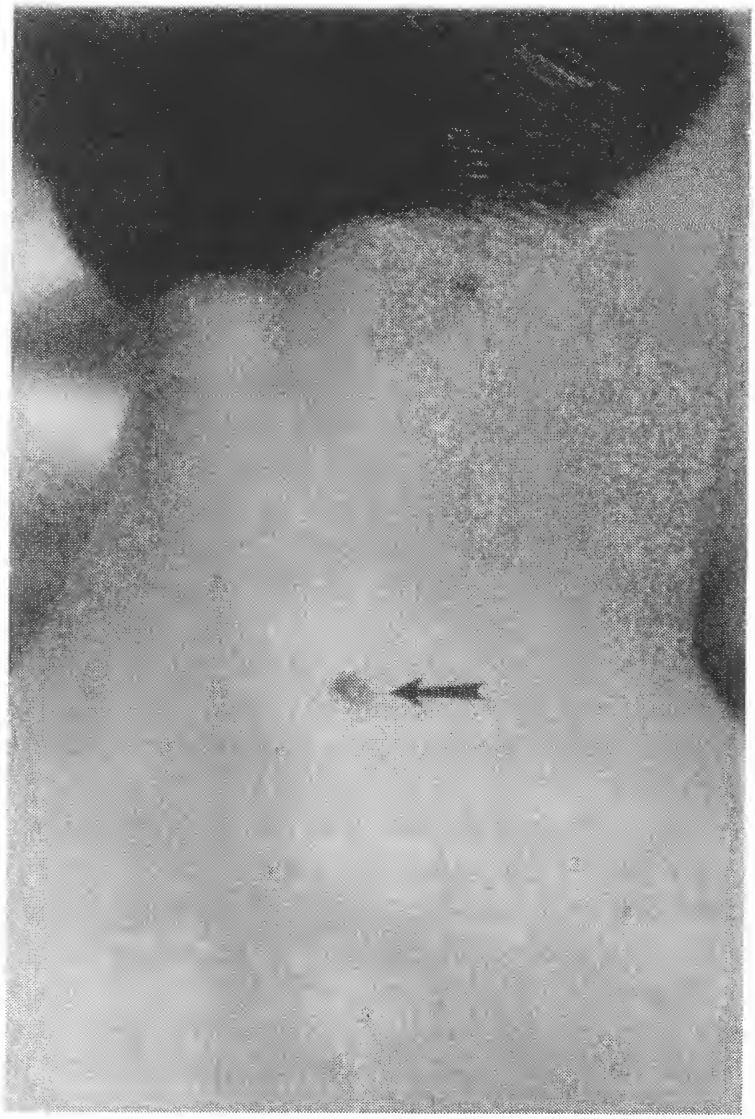

Figure 9-29 Birthmark on the lower part of the back of Maung Yin Maung's neck as it appeared in November 1974, when he was a few months more than 14 years old. The birthmark was a slightly raised, dark brown hyperpigmented nevus. It was approximately 5 millimeters in diameter.
Another, somewhat smaller, hyperpigmented nevus can be seen near the hairline; it had no known connection with the previous life.

DISCUSSION OF CASES WITH NEVI

Later chapters of this work will include reports of additional cases in which the subject had a nevus corresponding to a nevus on the person whose life the subject remembered. The cases of William George, Jr., Huriye Bugay, and Jennifer Pollock provide further examples of this relationship still to be described. I also

present later some additional examples of nevi deriving from wounds, such as that in the case of Sivanthie Hettiaratchi. Although readers do not yet have before them the reports of the additional cases still to be presented, this chapter seems a suitable place in which to discuss two features of the cases with nevi: the role of inheritance in some instances and the diversity of wounds or other lesions corresponding to different types of nevi.

The Inheritance of Nevi

In all but one of the cases in which a hyperpigmented macule corresponded to a similar macule on the previous personality, subject and previous personality belonged to the same family. (The exceptional case is that of Maung Yin Maung.) In three cases (William George, Jr., Huriye Bugay, and Sanjeev Sharma) the subject was a lineal descendant of the previous personality. These connections oblige us to consider the inheritability of nevi, particularly the inheritability of their location.

Several authors have published reports of families in which different members of the same family, over three or more generations, had had nevi at the same location (Cockayne, 1933; Denaro, 1944; Estabrook, 1928; Lingard, 1884; Maruri, 1949, 1961).

In all the cases that I have studied (with the single exception of the case of Dorabeth Crosby) neither of the subject's parents had had a birthmark at the location of the pertinent one on the subject's body. We need, therefore, to ask whether in cases of inherited nevi generations may sometimes be skipped so that, as in the case of Sanjeev Sharma, a great-grandparent of the subject and the subject may have birthmarks without a similar one appearing in intervening generations. There are a very few cases of this type. Leven (1929) and Brauer (1929) published pedigrees of two families in which a grandparent and at least one grandchild had nevi at the same location, but the parents of the intervening generation did not. Frieden and Williams (1994) reported two more cases in which a child and a maternal grandparent had a melanocytic nevus at the same site, but the child's mother did not. These cases, rare though they are, should make us cautious in attributing to reincarnation any case in which two members of different generations in the same family have birthmarks at the same location.

I was able to study a case of this type in India and will next describe its main features.

The Case of Dr. Birendra Narain. In February 1978, I was in Budaun, Uttar Pradesh, India, where I went to the Civil Hospital seeking a medical document bearing on one of the main cases of this work. (Dr. Satwant Pasricha was with me.) The Medical Superintendent, Dr. Birendra Narain, kindly assisted us, and, learning about the research, he showed us a prominent birthmark on himself. It was a large hyperpigmented macule on the calf of his left leg (Figure 9-30). Dr. Birendra Narain said that his grandfather had had a nevus in the same location and that he had personally examined his grandfather's birthmark and could testify that

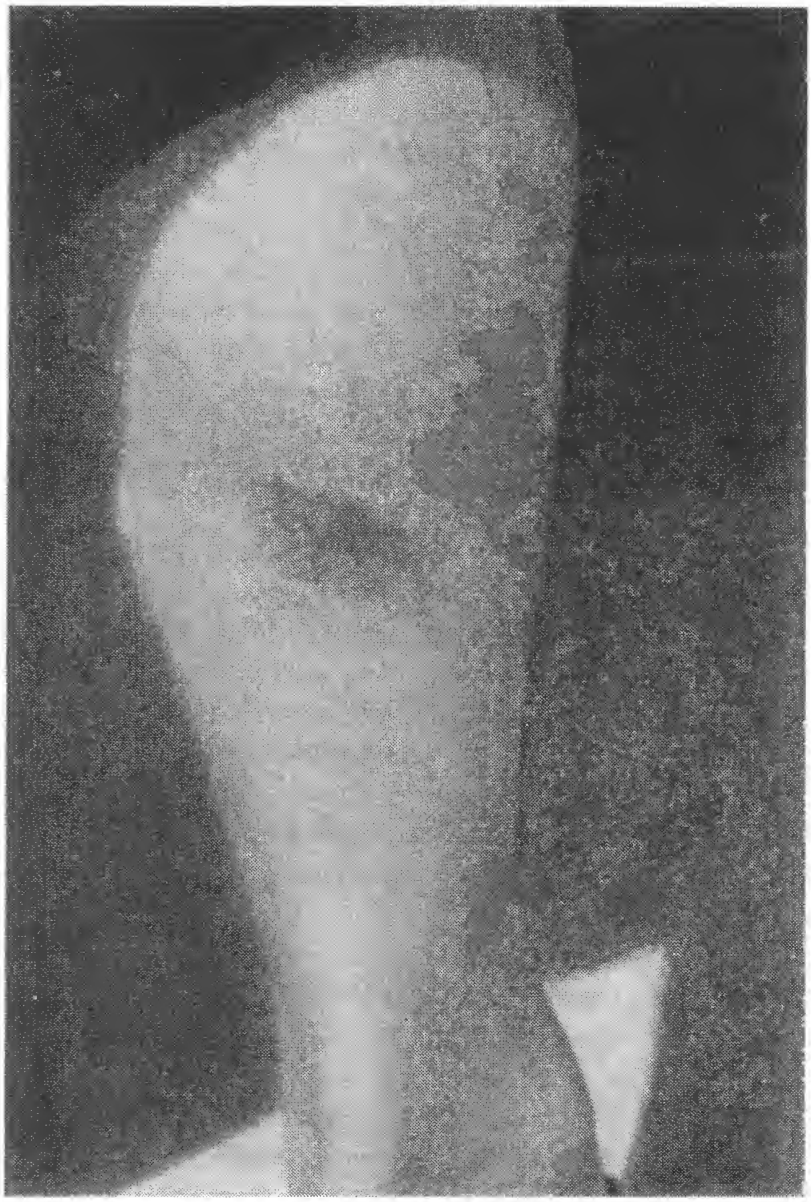

Figure 9-30 Birthmark on Dr. Birendra Narain as it appeared in October 1979, when he was 43 years old. The birthmark was an irregularly shaped hyperpigmented macule, roughly ovoid in shape and measuring about 2.5 centimeters by 1.5 centimeters. It was slightly hairier than the surrounding skin of normal pigmentation.

it was at the same location as his. It also had the same size and appearance as his. His father had no such birthmark.

In October 1979, I was again in Budaun and had a further interview with Dr. Birendra Narain, who then also permitted me to photograph his birthmark. I drew up a genealogy that included as many members of Dr. Birendra Narain's family as he could speak about with good authority on the question of interest. The genealogy included 22 members of the family during five generations. Dr. Birendra Narain believed that his great-grandfather had had a birthmark at the same loca-

tion as his and that of his grandfather. In 1978 he had identified this progenitor as his grandfather's great-grandfather, and I think he was only certain that a family tradition said some member earlier than Dr. Birendra Narain's grandfather had had a birthmark in the same location. However, apart from Dr. Birendra Narain, his grandfather, and perhaps some great-grandfather, no member of the family known to Dr. Birendra Narain had had a birthmark in the same location as his. Of particular relevance to our present topic is the skipping of Dr. Birendra Narain's father, who, it seems, was a carrier of the gene concerned in this birthmark, but had no birthmark himself. Geneticists would say that the responsible gene in this case and similar cases showed decreased penetrance.

The Diversity of Lesions to Which Different Types of Nevi Corresponded

Table 9-2 lists four types of nevi and, in relation to each type, different lesions to which the nevi corresponded together with examples from these cases.[13] (Most of the illustrative cases mentioned have been described in earlier chapters of this work; details of others can be found in later chapters.) The information in the table shows that each of four different types of nevi may correspond to a variety of different lesions, other marks, or birthmarks on a deceased person. Table 9-2 does not include all the different types of marks that seem to correspond with birthmarks. In the next chapter I shall describe the occurrence of experimental birthmarks at locations where a dying or dead person has been marked with ochre, soot, charcoal, or some other substance.

In Table 9-3 I have presented the same information but starting with seven different types of wounds or other marks. This table shows that the same type of wound or mark may correspond to different kinds of nevi. Readers should remember that Table 9-3 does not list all the types of birthmarks that have corresponded with the listed types of wounds and marks. For example, wounds from bullets and from blows to the head often correspond to scarlike areas having little or no change in pigmentation; Table 9-3 is concerned only with lesions that correspond to nevi on the subject. Also, I have not listed all possible examples for the categories in Tables 9-2 and 9-3. Instead, I have included only enough examples to make the point that the subject's skin may be an important determinant of the nature of a birthmark corresponding to a wound or other mark on the body of a deceased person whose life the person with the birthmark remembers.

My point is illustrated in a quasi-controlled way by the cases of Ma Khin Hsann Oo (described earlier in this chapter) and of Maung Min Min Aung (men-

[13]I am aware that dermatologists—for example, Solomon and Esterly (1973)—publish much more elaborate classifications of nevi, and my reduction of them to four types may seem absurdly oversimplified. I am not concerned here, however, with the histopathological differences between various lesions of the skin. Instead, I wish to draw attention to the wide variety of grossly visible nevi on subjects that correspond to a wide variety of wounds and other marks on a deceased person.

Table 9-2 **Varieties of Nevi Corresponding to Different Types of Wounds, Lesions, and Other Marks**

Type of Nevus on Subject	*Corresponding Type of Lesion on Previous Personality*	*Illustrative Cases*
1. Nevus flammeus	Burn	Patricia Fairley
		Faris Yuyucuer
	Blood on cadaver	Sunita Singh
		Ariya Noikerd
	Lipstick on cadaver	Ma Choe Hnin Htet (nuchal "salmon patch")
	Red medicine spilled on face	Ma Chit Chit Than
	Nevus flammeus	Cemal Kurt
	Blow to head from collapsing building	Yvonne Ehrlich
	Tattoo	U Po Thwai
2a. Melanocytic nevus; hyperpigmented macule (not elevated or hairy)	Bullet wounds	U Tinn Sein (unverified)
		Maung Mhat Tin
		Sivanthie Hettiaratchi
		Tali Sowaid
		Yusuf Güven (unverified)
	Crushing with abrasion	Maung Win Aung
	Blood on cadaver	Ma Shwe Yee (unverified)
		Narong Yensiri
	Tattoo	Maung Thein, John Rose
	Knife or spear wound	Charles Porter
		Henry Demmert, III,
		Yusuf Güven (unverified)
	Surgical incision	Susan Wilson
	Blow on the head	Nirankar Bhatnagar (unverified)
		Yusuf Güven (unverified)
	Carbuncle	Bir Sahai

Table 9-2 *(continued)*

Type of Nevus on Subject	*Corresponding Type of Lesion on Previous Personality*	*Illustrative Cases*
	Hyperpigmented macule	Maung Sein Nyunt Jennifer Pollock Ma Hla Ngwe Dorabeth Crosby Huriye Bugay
2b. Melanocytic nevus; elevated and/or hairy	Knife wound	Thiang San Kla
	Blow to head from falling or by weapon	Sunita Khandelwal
	Burns	Ma Khin Hsann Oo
	Sebaceous cyst	Maung Nyunt Win
	Surgical incision	Corliss Chotkin, Jr.
	Hyperpigmented and/or hairy nevus	Sanjeev Sharma William George, Jr. Maung Yin Maung
3. Hypopigmented macules	Stab wounds from knife	Lûtfi Sarıkaya (unverified)
	Ulcer of yaws	Ijeoma Nwangwu
	Shotgun wound	Hanumant Saxena
	Incised wound from cut on rock	Aristide Kolotey
	Surgical incision	Muhittin Yılmaz Ma Choe Hnin Htet
	Incised wound from axe or spear	Tong In Songcham Nasruddin Shah

Table 9-3 **Types of Lesions and Corresponding Varieties of Nevi**

Type of Lesion or Other Mark on Previous Personality	*Types of Corresponding Nevus or Lesion on Subject*	*Illustrative Cases*
1. Incised wounds from knives, swords, spears, or axes	Hyperpigmented macule	Henry Demmert III Charles Porter Yusuf Güven (unverified)
	Hyperpigmented elevated nevus	Thiang San Kla
	Hypopigmented macule	Nasruddin Shah Tong In Songcham Lûtfi Sarıkaya (unverified)
	No birthmark	Maung Kyaw Thein
2. Bullet wounds	Hyperpigmented macule	Maung Mhat Tin Tali Sowaid U Tinn Sein (unverified) Chanai Choomalaiwong Frank Dudley Sivanthie Hettiaratchi Yusuf Güven (unverified)
	Hypopigmented macule	Hanumant Saxena
	No birthmark	Itidal Abul-Hisn
3. Surgical incisions	Hyperpigmented macule	Susan Wilson
	Hyperpigmented elevated nevus	Corliss Chotkin, Jr.
	Hypopigmented linear area	Muhittin Yılmaz Ma Choe Hnin Htet
	No birthmark	Ratana Wongsombat

4. Burns	Nevus flammeus	Patricia Fairley
		Faris Yuyucuer
	Erythematous vesicular dermatitis	Maung Yin Maung
	Hyperpigmented hairy nevus	Ma Khin Hsann Oo
	No birthmark	Maung Min Min Aung
5. Blows to head or trunk of the body	Hyperpigmented macule	Sunita Khandelwal
		Nirankar Bhatnagar (unverified)
		Yusuf Güven (unverified)
	Nevus flammeus	Yvonne Ehrlich
6. Tattoos	Hyperpigmented macule	Maung Thein
		John Rose
	Nevus flammeus	Maung Po Thwai
7. Blood on cadaver	Nevus flammeus	Sunita Singh
		Ariya Noikerd
	Hyperpigmented macule	Ma Shwe Yee (unverified)
		Narong Yensiri

tioned in the report of Ma Khin Hsann Oo's case). They remembered the lives of two persons who had been severely burned when a truck in which they were both traveling turned over and caught fire. Ma Khin Hsann Oo was born with numerous hyperpigmented nevi, presumably corresponding to areas where the person (Ma Ahmar Yee) whose life she remembered had been burned; in contrast, Maung Min Min Aung had no birthmarks whatever. I have included Maung Min Min Aung in Table 9-3.

I have also listed in Table 9-3 single examples of other subjects who had no birthmarks, although they remembered the lives of persons who were respectively cut with swords, shot in the head, and operated on surgically, all being thus fatally wounded.

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10

The Prediction of Birthmarks

INTRODUCTION

Many scientists emphasize the importance of prediction as a test of theory, and a few even believe that a theory has no merit unless it generates successful predictions. I believe that successful predictions do not so much confirm a theory as demonstrate the theory-maker's confidence in it. Predictions about birthmarks seem to illustrate this feature of assurance on the part of the predictor concerning some future event. In the present chapter I describe five types of predictions related to birthmarks.

Predictions of Finding an Already Existing Birthmark

In the first group, a living person predicted the occurrence of a birthmark that already existed but that had not been noticed, at least by the person making the prediction. I have already described instances of this type of prediction. In the case of Savitri Devi Pathak, the parents of the child whose life Savitri Devi remembered said, before seeing her: "If she has a mark on the left thumb, then she is our child." In the report of Lûtfi Sarıkaya's case I described how Reşat Bayer, after hearing that Lûtfi had said he was stabbed in the previous life several times (not just once), examined Lûtfi's chest again and found several small birthmarks that he and I had not noticed earlier, when we had seen only one birthmark. In Chapter 21 I present a similar case (that of Maung Khin Ohn) in which the previous personality's daughter demanded (on the strength of a dream) to see a particular baby on which, she said, a birthmark corresponded to a scar on her father's chest, which was true.

In this chapter I include four cases of this group. In the first of these cases, after listening to an informant's descriptions of the previous personality's wounds, I returned to the subject and was shown a second birthmark not previously mentioned to me. In the second case I predicted after studying medical records that we would find on the subject a birthmark about which we had not yet learned. In the third case the appearance of one birthmark stimulated me to predict that we would find another one on the same subject. In the fourth case, a member of the previous personality's family predicted that the subject would have a birthmark that the subject's own family had not yet noticed. (My more indulgent readers might credit me with a similar prediction in the case of Metin Köybaşı, but in reporting that case, in Chapter 6, I said I was not fully satisfied concerning the congenitality of Metin's second birthmark.) To this first group of cases I have attached a fifth in which I reasoned backward from the location of a birthmark to the nature of the wound to which it seemed to correspond.

Predictions by a Living Person about a Birthmark in the Next Incarnation

In the second group of cases a person who expects to be reborn predicts that he or she will have a birthmark or birthmarks at particular sites of his or her next body. In this chapter I give one example of such a prediction, and in Chapter 12 I give another example. I have investigated a third case of this type. It is that of a Gitksan woman (of British Columbia) who said that when she would be reborn her next body would have a birthmark at the back of her neck. The subject of this case, Penelope Clark, who had some memories of this woman's life, did have a birthmark at the back of her neck. However, by the time I studied the case, Penelope was 17½ years old, and of the birthmark on the neck I could discern only a few small areas of hyperpigmentation. I have no photograph of the residue of this birthmark.

Predictions of Birthmarks by Ostensibly Discarnate Personalities

In a third group of cases a discarnate personality appears to make a prediction about a birthmark—either through someone's dream or during a mediumistic séance. Delarrey (1955) reported a case in which a discarnate communicator correctly predicted the birth of a baby (in a particular family) with a malformed right ear similar to a malformed right ear the communicator had had when alive. I describe a single case of this type in this chapter.

The announcing dreams that figure prominently in the cases of many cultures, especially that of Burma, sometimes contain allusions to birthmarks or predictions that a baby to be born will have one. In the case of Brij Chandra Saran in India, the discarnate person whose life Brij Chandra Saran remembered—this happened to be his own father, so that he was in the curious situation of remembering the previous life of his father—predicted that the baby in which he would reincarnate would have a birthmark on his back. Brij Chandra Saran did have one there, but it soon faded.

Another example occurred in the Burmese case of Daw Htoon, which U Win Maung studied (but I have not). Daw Htoon, who was born in 1916, remembered the life of her paternal grandmother, Daw Pan Hsaing. Before Daw Htoon's mother became pregnant with her, Daw Pan Hsaing's sister, Daw Kauk, dreamed that her sister (the deceased Daw Pan Hsaing) appeared to her and said: "I am going to be born into U Po Min's family. [U Po Min was Daw Pan Hsaing's son and Daw Htoon's father.] If you don't believe me, the child will be born with the feet first. You will also see that the toes will be joined on its foot." Daw Htoon was born feet first, and the second and third toes of her right foot were partly joined (syndactylous). Daw Pan Hsaing had had no defect of her toes. U Win Maung sent me a photograph of the toes of Daw Htoon's right foot. (This case so far depends exclusively on the statements of Daw Htoon herself without confirmation from other witnesses.)

In Chapter 14 I describe an announcing dream in the case of Ma Thoung. In the dream, the previous personality of her case said that the baby in whose body she would be reborn would have a birthmark on her neck, which Ma Thoung had.

Predictions of Birthmarks Corresponding to Marks Made on the Body of a Dying or Recently Deceased Person: Experimental Birthmarks

In the fourth group of predictions someone deliberately marks a dying or recently dead person with the expectation that when the person is reborn, he or she will have on the new body a mark at the location where the dying or dead person was marked. These cases of what we call experimental birthmarks seem to me to have great importance for this subject, and I present 12 cases that I investigated and 6 others studied less thoroughly by Daw Hnin Aye. Before the case reports, I provide a special introduction to them, and after the case reports I offer a short analysis of some of their common features.

Predictions of Birthmarks Made by Saintly Persons

In the fifth group of predictions, a sage or holy man predicts that a baby to be born will have a birthmark at a particular site of its body. De Liso (1961, p. 213) described a prediction of this type that Padre Pio, the saintly Italian stigmatist whose case I mentioned in Chapter 2, had made.

In Allahabad, India, I examined a child, Anupam Varma, who had a birthmark that a baba (Indian holy man) had predicted. The baba knew that the daughter-in-law of my informant (Anupam's grandfather) was pregnant. He said that the child would be a female. The father of the child (whom I did not interview) said he wished to have a boy. The baba then said that he would arrange for the child's sex to be changed (with the help of his *deva* [goddess]) and that to certify the change, as it were, the baby would have a birthmark on its right buttock. The baba made this prediction in August 1967 when Anupam's mother was 5 months pregnant. Anupam was born on December 18, 1967. He had a deeply pigmented birthmark on his right buttock. I examined him on November 5, 1969, when he was a

little under 2 years old. The birthmark on the right buttock was a roundish hyperpigmented, almost black, macule, about 1 centimeter in diameter. Up to that time Anupam had made no references to a previous life.

Comment. In his case and probably in most others of this group we cannot exclude the interpretation of a maternal impression.

CASE REPORTS

THE CASE OF CEMIL FAHRICI

Summary of the Case and Its Investigation

Cemil Fahrici was born in Antakya, Turkey, in 1935. (I did not learn a more precise date for his birth.) His parents were Mikail Fahrici and his wife, Meryem. Mikail Fahrici was an agricultural laborer at one time, but he may have had other occupations that I did not learn about. (He died in 1967, soon after the investigation of his son's case began, and I never met him.) Meryem had been married to another man before she married Mikail Fahrici, and with her first husband she had a son called Sabri Fahrici. (I assume that Sabri later adopted the name of his stepfather.) In addition to Cemil, Mikail and Meryem Fahrici had at least one other child, Cemil's older sister, Besime. Sabri was born in 1922 and was thus 13 years older than Cemil; and Besime was born in (about) 1928, so that she was 6 or 7 years older than Cemil.

During the night before Cemil's birth, Mikail Fahrici had a dream in which a distant relative, Cemil Hayik, entered his (Mikail's) house. Cemil's parents had just learned of Cemil Hayik's death under circumstances that I shall describe below. The dream prepared Cemil's parents to believe that Cemil Hayik had been reborn as their son. So did a birthmark that Cemil's parents noticed on the right side of his neck under his chin (Figure 10-1); it corresponded in location to a wound on the body of Cemil Hayik. He had been a celebrated bandit who had shot himself at the climax of a dramatic shoot-out with police of the French government, which then ruled the Turkish province of Hatay. (See Appendix A.)

When Cemil Fahrici began to speak, at the age of about 2, he described "bit by bit" the life and (particularly) the death of Cemil Hayik. Somewhat later, he met surviving members of Cemil Hayik's family and impressed them so much with the knowledge he had of Cemil Hayik's life that they tried to persuade his parents to let them have Cemil to adopt and, in their view, "have back." Cemil Fahrici, for his part, was not diffident about his claim to be Cemil Hayik reborn. Although he had been given at birth another name, "Dahham," he refused to respond to it, with the result that eventually his family yielded and called him "Cemil."

Reşat Bayer learned of this case in 1966, and he recorded lengthy depositions about it from Cemil Fahrici and his mother, Meryem. In 1967 I met both of these informants and interviewed them again. I also interviewed Cemil's older stepbrother, Sabri. In 1970 and 1971 Reşat Bayer and I extended our inquiries by

Figure 10-1 Birthmark on the right upper neck of Cemil Fahrici in 1967, when he was 32 years old. This mark, an area of scarring with alopecia under the mandible, corresponded to the wound of entry on Cemil Hayik. It was about 2 centimeters long and 1 centimeter wide.

means of interviews with members of Cemil Hayik's family and with a member of the platoon of gendarmes who had participated in the shoot-out with Cemil Hayik. In addition, we interviewed Cemil Fahrici's older sister, Besime, who mentioned some important details. We also interviewed some other informants who mainly provided background or subsidiary information.

Reşat Bayer and I met Cemil Fahrici again in 1971, Reşat Bayer met him alone in 1976, and we again met him together in 1977.

Persons Interviewed during the Investigation

In Antakya I interviewed:

Cemil Fahrici
Meryem Fahrici, Cemil Fahrici's mother
Besime Fahrici Erkek, Cemil Fahrici's older sister
Rüzane Hayik Yıldırım, Cemil Hayik's sister
Fevziye Hayik Görür, Cemil Hayik's sister
Tevfik Elçi, ex-member of the French gendarmerie in Hatay
Reşit Habiboğlu, Cemil Fahrici's father-in-law; ex-soldier of the French Army in Turkey
Ahmet Yılmaz, acquaintance of Rüzane Hayik Yıldırım; ex-soldier of the French Army in Turkey

In İskenderun I interviewed:

Sabri Fahrici, Cemil Fahrici's older stepbrother
Haydar Elçi, ex-member of the French gendarmerie in Turkey; Tevfik Elçi's brother

My principal informants for Cemil Hayik's career as a bandit and for the details of his death were his older sister Rüzane and Haydar Elçi, who had been a member of the platoon of French gendarmes that finally surrounded Cemil Hayik and were about to kill him when he shot himself.

In 1970 I tried to reach and interview Cemil Hayik's older sister Nazire, who figured prominently in the affair that led to his becoming an outlaw; but a flooded river blocked access to Kaharnub, the rather remote village in the mountains near Samandağ where she lived. In 1971 Reşat Bayer and I were able to reach Kaharnub, only to find that Nazire was attending a funeral elsewhere. Her testimony would have been interesting, but I doubt whether she could have added any salient information to what we had already learned.

Relevant Facts of Geography and Previous Acquaintance between the Families Concerned

In 1967 Cemil Fahrici told me that Cemil Hayik's father was his father's "brother," and therefore his own paternal uncle. Rüzane Hayik Yıldırım, however, denied this.

She thought the two families might have been distantly related, but said that they were not so closely related as Cemil Fahrici believed. I now think that Cemil Fahrici was using the word "brother" loosely, as many Asian informants do; they sometimes apply this word to distant relatives and even to unrelated members of the same community. It is more important that the two families knew each other before the development of the case. Both had homes in Antakya, although both also had spent some time in villages outside the city. It would, however, have made little difference to the evaluation of Cemil Fahrici's statements about Cemil Hayik if the two families had *not* known each other personally. The details of Cemil Hayik's life were as well known in Antakya as those of Robin Hood in England. I do not think that Cemil Fahrici could have said anything about Cemil Hayik that his family did not already know. (I should add that no informant claimed that he had done so.) This means, therefore, that the case derives its interest with regard to paranormal features from Cemil Fahrici's birthmarks.

The Life and Death of Cemil Hayik

My comparison of Cemil Hayik with Robin Hood was deliberate and, in more than one respect, appropriate. It is particularly so with regard to the difficulty of dissecting fact from legend. Cemil Hayik really did exist, however, whereas Robin Hood has not been clearly identified with any single known person.

My first information about Cemil Hayik came from Cemil Fahrici's own detailed account of what he still claimed to remember about the first Cemil's life and death. This had no value as evidence of paranormal knowledge, because, as I have explained, Cemil Fahrici had many opportunities to learn about Cemil Hayik normally. I regarded what he said as only a rough guide to what I should enquire about from firsthand informants. Of these, the most valuable were Cemil Hayik's sister, Rüzane, and the ex-gendarme, Haydar Elçi, who had taken part in the final hunt for Cemil Hayik. Each spoke of some events not mentioned by the other; but their accounts agreed on nearly all details when they remembered the same events. One discrepancy in their testimony concerned the number of cartridges remaining to Cemil Hayik when he killed himself. Haydar Elçi said that, when the shoot-out ended, Cemil still had more than 100 cartridges left—he actually said 103, as if someone had counted them and he had remembered the number. Rüzane claimed that Cemil Hayik shot at the policemen until he had only two cartridges left—one with which to kill his brother and one for himself. Since she was not an eyewitness of the shoot-out (and Haydar Elçi was), I concluded that she had heightened the drama in her brother's death. Haydar Elçi, on the other hand, could qualify only as a secondhand informant for much of what he said concerning the circumstances and course of Cemil Hayik's earlier career as a bandit.[1] Since, on

[1]I think the reader is entitled to know that Haydar Elçi claimed that he himself could remember 40 previous lives of which the first was that of Alexander the Great. Does this pretension disqualify him as a reliable witness for the events with which we are here concerned? That it should not do so seems to me shown by the rather close agreement between his statements and those of other informants.

the whole, Rüzane's account accorded with that of Haydar Elçi (and those of other informants), I have combined the different testimonies in the following summary of Cemil Hayik's life and death.

Cemil Hayik was born (probably) in 1912 in the village of Kaharnub, which lies in the mountains about halfway between Antakya and the smaller town of Samandağ. His father, Mehmet Hayik, was the chief of a group of bandits. He was the object of an intense hunt by the French police. It appears that Cemil Hayik first took up banditry as a sort of apprentice to his father.

In about 1932, two men ravished two of Cemil Hayik's sisters. One of them was a rejected suitor for one of the sisters, so the rape had the motive of revenge against the family. Cemil Hayik found these rapes an intolerable affront to family honor. He waited for an opportunity and then killed the rapists. (Haydar Elçi said that before this episode Cemil Hayik had already killed two other men who had led the police, searching for his father, to their house in the mountains.) The police then began to hunt for Cemil Hayik, whose friends persuaded him to surrender. He did so, was tried, and condemned to death. While in prison he feigned illness, so that he was transferred to a hospital; from there he contrived to escape by exchanging clothes with his wife when she visited him.

After his escape from prison, Cemil Hayik resumed the life of a bandit and continued to evade the police for upwards of 2 years. He survived by robbing travelers on the rather isolated roads between Antakya and Samandağ. (Even in the late 1960s and 1970s, the curving, hilly road that joined these places, which are about 30 kilometers apart, passed through wild and sparsely inhabited country; in the 1930s it must have provided many opportunities for a bandit to appear without warning—and to disappear almost as quickly.) Cemil Hayik took from the persons he stopped on the road only enough money for his food, cigarettes, and ammunition. Even his opponent, Haydar Elçi, conceded that Cemil Hayik—apart from murder—led an almost blameless life. As for murder, while he was a fugitive he appears to have killed only persons who tried to betray him to the police and the police themselves. If he had special needs in Antakya or wished to visit members of his family living there, he would disguise himself in women's clothes and move about the city unnoticed.

At one time the police arrested Cemil Hayik's younger brother, İbrahim, and detained him in prison as a kind of hostage; but İbrahim managed to escape and fled to the mountains, where he joined his brother in brigandage.

In the mid-1930s, when these events were taking place, the government of Turkey was working firmly, but peacefully, for the return of Hatay to Turkish sovereignty. Under the circumstances, Cemil Hayik might have assumed the role of a patriot resisting Turkey's French oppressors. But he did not do so, and although he attracted much sympathy,[2] no one appears to have regarded him as a partisan sol-

[2]A reader of this report having expressed surprise that anyone could describe Cemil Hayik's career as "blameless" (apart from murder) and at his having "attracted much sympathy," it seems important to emphasize that the events narrated here took place in a remote part of Turkey in the *(continued)*

dier. This was anyway an unlikely development, since he belonged to the Arab minority of Hatay that did not favor the detachment of Hatay from Syria and its union with Turkey.

Nevertheless, outlawry of the type practiced by the Hayik brothers required the aid, or at least the fearful acquiescence, of the other mountain people. This support gradually diminished, and, at the end of at least 2 years, a man at whose house the Hayik brothers had stopped to eat succeeded in sending a message to the police about their whereabouts. A squad of police surrounded the house and shooting began. Although the police had a large number of men, the affair was not one-sided. According to their sister, Rüzane, the Hayik brothers killed three policemen and wounded seven. The police then managed to pour gasoline on the roof of the house and set it on fire. As the fire consumed the house, the shots from inside it ceased. Then the ensuing silence was broken by two more shots followed by silence again. Cautiously, the police approached the house and kicked the door open. Haydar Elçi was one of the first to enter. They found the bodies of Cemil and İbrahim Hayik lying together on the floor.

Both bodies had wounds under the chins and at the tops of the skulls. Bullets had evidently entered under the chins and exited at the tops of the heads. Both Haydar Elçi and Rüzane Hayik Yıldırım remembered the wound of entry in Cemil Hayik as in the midline of the neck under the chin rather than to one side or the other. Haydar Elçi gestured with both his hands to indicate that the exiting bullet had lifted up the top of Cemil Hayik's skull.

Blood along the floor indicated that one body had been dragged across it after being wounded. It was noted that the heads of both bodies pointed south—toward Mecca. It was clear that the police shots had not killed either of the Hayik brothers. The acceptable hypotheses were that they had both killed themselves, one a little after the other, or that one had killed the other first and then killed himself. Ahmet Yılmaz said he believed Cemil Hayik had killed İbrahim with a shot under the chin to show that he was not killed by the French gendarmes.

The French police put the two bodies onto a horse, carried them into Antakya, and displayed them publicly for a day or two in front of the Court House. (Rüzane Hayik Yıldırım said that the bodies were taken first to the government hospital, where examinations confirmed that the brothers had not died of wounds received from the police guns.) The bodies were then turned over to the family for burial.

Cemil Hayik and his brother died in 1935. Haydar Elçi thought, somewhat unsurely, that the month was December. I tried to find records of the shoot-out in the provincial archives of Hatay. Unfortunately, when the French withdrew from Hatay in 1939, they took with them many of their records, and others were dis-

[2]*(continued)* 1930s. To most people of the area at that time it would have seemed right—almost obligatory—for Cemil Hayik to have killed the rapists of his sisters. After that, Cemil Hayik did little harm except to the police and their informers; and his activity against the police, who had the additional stigma of being French or employed by the French, would have earned him more credit.

Figure 10-2 Cemil Hayik. The photograph was apparently signed and printed for sale as a postcard.

persed. I was told that nothing useful in the way of documentation had survived from the period of the French government of Hatay.

The fame of Cemil Hayik died slowly. I have a photograph of him that includes his signature and appears to have been taken from a postcard sold by an enterprising photographer in Antakya (Figure 10-2). He apparently became a folk hero among the Arabic-speaking minority of Hatay.

An Announcing Dream

I mentioned earlier that Mikail Fahrici had a dream about Cemil Hayik after his death. The sole informant for the content of this dream was Mikail's wife,

Meryem, who could give little detail about it. In it Cemil Hayik entered their house; that was all. I did not learn from Meryem Fahrici when her husband had this dream; but Cemil Fahrici, who presumably had learned about it much later from his father, said that the dream occurred the night following Cemil Hayik's death, which was (he said) the night before his own birth.

The Interval between Cemil Hayik's Death and Cemil Fahrici's Birth

The French authorities probably acted from mixed motives when they publicly displayed the bodies of Cemil and İbrahim Hayik in front of the Court House at Antakya. They surely hoped to deter other persons tempted to banditry; and perhaps they also enjoyed showing that the French government, frustrated during more than 2 years, had asserted its authority in the mountains between Antakya and Samandağ. Large crowds turned out to view the bodies; this had the positive effect for these investigations that everyone in the city of Antakya knew when Cemil Hayik had died and how. It also makes credible Meryem Fahrici's statement that she gave birth to Cemil the day after the bodies of Cemil and İbrahim Hayik were brought into Antakya. She did not go to view the bodies of the Hayik brothers herself, but she learned about their being publicly displayed in front of the Court House.

Cemil Fahrici's older stepbrother, Sabri, said that Cemil was born 2 days after Cemil Hayik's death. However, although Sabri was 13 years older than Cemil, he was not living with his mother and stepfather at the time of Cemil Fahrici's birth; so his information was secondhand.

I think the French police must have taken a day (at least) to pull themselves together after the shoot-out in the mountains and to bring the bodies (on horseback) into the city. The distance to be traveled was at least 20 kilometers. The interval therefore between Cemil Hayik's death and Cemil Fahrici's birth was, at most, 3 days.

Statements and Recognitions Made By Cemil Fahrici

I will not present a detailed, tabular account of Cemil Fahrici's statements and recognitions concerning the previous life. There are two reasons for this. First, as I have already mentioned, information about the life and death of Cemil Hayik was widely diffused throughout the whole of Antakya; one could not, therefore, regard any verifiable statement that Cemil Fahrici made about Cemil Hayik as having any value as evidence of a paranormal process. Second, Reşat Bayer and I only began to investigate the case in 1966 and 1967, when the subject was already in his early 30s. I do not regard such a long interval between the main events of a case and its investigation as necessarily vitiating an attempt to establish the details of what a subject said about the previous life when younger; but it certainly makes this difficult, and, under the circumstances, I did not think that the results would justify the necessary time and effort.

With the above disclaimers stated, I will now mention some features of Cemil Fahrici's statements that deserve attention.

The principal informants for what Cemil Fahrici said when he was a young child—these were his mother, Meryem, his older sister, Besime, and Cemil Hayik's sister, Rüzane—agreed that he had given a full account of the life and death of Cemil Hayik. Meryem Fahrici said Cemil told this "bit by bit."

Rüzane Yıldırım did not meet Cemil until he was about 5 or 6 years old. She said that he was not then able to give a spontaneous, flowing account of the life of Cemil Hayik; but he answered correctly many questions put to him. Rüzane Yıldırım attributed Cemil's inability to give a full account of the previous life to the effects of the measures earlier taken by his family to make him forget the previous life. (I describe these below.) Nevertheless, Cemil could still give some information about the previous life. He said that he was married, and he gave correctly the name, Hamama, of Cemil Hayik's wife. He was asked to identify members of the Hayik family, and he accurately gave the names of three of Cemil Hayik's sisters—Rüzane, Nazire, and Fevziye—who were present. He also recognized a photograph of Cemil Hayik. I did not learn further details about these recognitions.

When Reşat Bayer and I first interviewed Cemil Fahrici in 1966 and 1967, he said that he could still remember all the main details of the life and death of Cemil Hayik. He certainly gave a long and circumstantial account of these as if from his own imaged memories. However, as I have repeatedly emphasized in discussing other cases, it is difficult to say whether such statements given in adulthood derive from persisting imaged memories of the previous life, from memories of what other persons told the subject he had said when younger, from information normally acquired about the previous life, or from two or more of these sources. Cemil Fahrici was not an overconfident informant for his own case, however, and he seemed to have had some ability to distinguish his primary memories from what he might have learned from other persons.

Concerning the last moments in the lives of Cemil and İbrahim Hayik, Cemil Fahrici claimed to speak with particular authority. There were no eyewitnesses to their wounding, and the accepted facts—of the way the bodies were laid out in the house of the shoot-out and the locations of their wounds—only established that they had not died of shots fired by the police. Cemil Fahrici made (in 1967) the following statement:

> A platoon of French police surrounded our house, and since we fought back energetically they poured gasoline on the house and set it on fire. I saw that we were doomed, and so I told my brother to close his eyes. When he did as I asked, I shot him. Then I put the butt of my rifle on the ground and the muzzle at my throat. I released the trigger with my toe. That was my end....But here I am back on earth again. They say I was born the day after my suicide...

Cemil Fahrici could not remember (in 1967) in what part of İbrahim's body Cemil Hayik had shot him. He also said that he had forgotten details of how the

French police had brought the bodies of Cemil and İbrahim Hayik into Antakya from the mountains; he said that he had been told that he had narrated details of this journey when he was 3 years old, but he no longer remembered anything about it as from his primary memories.

Cemil Fahrici's Behavior Related to the Previous Life

Circumstances of Occurrence of Cemil Fahrici's Memories. I learned nothing about special circumstances that stimulated Cemil Fahrici to talk about the previous life he claimed to remember.

Cemil Fahrici said that he had nightmares about the previous life up to the age of between 6 and 7. His older stepbrother, Sabri, confirmed that Cemil had had nightmares about the previous life. He recalled that when Cemil would awaken in the morning he would say that he had had a dream of fighting with the French police.[3]

Cemil Fahrici's Rejection of His Given Name. I mentioned above that Cemil Fahrici's parents had given him the name "Dahham" when he was born. (They did this notwithstanding their conviction that he was [probably] Cemil Hayik reborn.) When Cemil Fahrici began to speak—at the age of about 2—and to narrate details of the life of Cemil Hayik, he at the same time refused to be called by other names. (The family tried to call him by more than one alternative name.) He insisted on being called "Cemil" and burst into tears when called by other names. His parents took measures that I shall describe below to induce amnesia in him. When these failed, they consulted a hoca,[4] who advised them to yield and call the boy "Cemil." So they did this, and Meryem Fahrici said the change had a calming effect on her son.[5]

Members of his family did not propose to call him by the full name of "Cemil Hayik." But a tendency to do this nevertheless developed. In 1967 Cemil Fahrici said that "everyone" called him "Cemil Hayik." He seemed to find this gratifying.

Cemil Fahrici's Animosity toward Policemen. In 1967 Cemil Fahrici remembered that when he was a young child he would throw stones at soldiers and policemen. He played with a stick as if it were a rifle. He recalled that once he had tried to take his father's rifle and shoot some French soldiers with it. (If French soldiers, not Turkish ones, were the targets of his anger on this occasion,

[3]Other subjects who have dreamed about previous lives that they also remembered when awake include Prakash Varshnay, Sujith Lakmal Jayaratne, Shamlinie Prema, Suleyman Andary, Salem Andary, and Bongkuch Promsin.

[4]Hocas (pronounced "hojas") are religious teachers, who are often credited with saintly qualities and paranormal powers. It is common to consult them in illness or other misfortune.

[5]The parents of İsmail Altınkılıç similarly yielded to his demands that he be called "Abit," the name of the man whose life İsmail remembered. They had his name legally changed.

Other subjects who resisted being called by their given names and preferred, or insisted upon, the previous personality's name include: Pappu Tiwari, Ma Choe Hnin Htet, Semih Tutuşmuş, Necip Ünlütaşkıran, Tali Sowaid, Santosh Sukla, Linda Chijioke, Anurak Sithipan, and Mehmet Samioğlu.

the episode must have occurred when he was less than 4 years old, since the French had withdrawn from Hatay by the end of July 1939.)

Cemil's sister Besime remembered seeing him—as a child of 7—rush toward policemen with a stick aimed as if it were a rifle. He then shouted that he was going to kill them before they killed his brother.

Meryem Fahrici recalled her son's animosity toward men in uniform when he was a young child. She said that he would try to strike them with a stick, or would aim a stick at them as if it were a rifle. He also threw stones at them.

Sabri Fahrici, Cemil's older stepbrother, also remembered Cemil's throwing stones at policemen. He said further that Cemil (when young) played roughly with other children so that they complained of his behavior; he himself felt ashamed of his younger brother's misconduct. Sabri Fahrici said that Cemil seemed to him to become anxious when he saw a policeman. According to him, Cemil continued to have this fear even into adulthood. Speaking to this last point, Cemil said (in 1970) that he had been afraid of policemen up to the age of 7, but had lost the fear thereafter.

By the time I first met Cemil Fahrici in 1967, he had lost all trace of a "bandit attitude." He said that he had no wish to live the life of an outlaw in the mountains. He was then married and working peacefully and successfully as an independent baker.

Cemil Fahrici's Attitudes toward Members of Cemil Hayik's Family. As a child, Cemil Fahrici was happy when taken to the Hayik family, and he cried when the visit ended. Later, he exchanged gifts with the Hayik family.

However, Cemil also grumbled to his sister Besime that he did not like Cemil Hayik's sisters because they had been the cause of much trouble for him (in the previous life).

Other Behavior of Cemil Fahrici

In 1977 Cemil Fahrici mentioned to me that he had what amounted to a phobia of blood. The sight of wounded persons with blood flowing would bring on a headache, and he tried to avoid such scenes. He had never mentioned this phobia during earlier interviews; but we had not asked him about it. He said that he first experienced such fright and headaches when, at the age of about 10, he saw the bloody body of a man whom the police had killed. (This phobia is not necessarily related to the previous life.)

The Attitude of the Adults Concerned toward the Case

Cemil Fahrici's parents believed, probably from his birth on, that he was Cemil Hayik reborn. They were influenced by Mikail Fahrici's dream and by the birthmarks on Cemil's neck and head, which I shall describe in the next section of this report. Rüzane Hayik Yıldırım told me that at the time Cemil Fahrici was born, her family heard that Cemil Hayik had been reborn. Her (and Cemil Hayik's) mother, Şamma Hayik, treated this rumor with reserve. Şamma Hayik did

not accept Cemil Fahrici as being her son reborn until after he began to speak about the life of Cemil Hayik.

Haydar Elçi, who was mainly an informant for the career of Cemil Hayik and the shoot-out that terminated it, said that he had gone to see Cemil Fahrici when he was about a year old. He had seen the birthmark on Cemil's neck. He said that "everyone" went to see him. Since Cemil, according to his mother, did not begin to talk about the life of Cemil Hayik until he was about 2 years old, he must have become available for viewing by the curious on the basis of his father's dream and his principal birthmark.

When, however, Cemil later refused the name of "Dahham" and insisted that everyone call him "Cemil," his parents saw matters differently. They then considered that they should suppress Cemil's memories of the previous life. Parents who wish to stop children talking about previous lives dispose of a variety of methods for doing this. Cemil's parents put bitter substances in his mouth and also spat in it.

I mentioned above that Cemil Hayik's mother at first treated the case with skepticism. But later Cemil Hayik's parents became completely convinced that Cemil Fahrici was their son reborn, and they asked to be allowed to adopt Cemil Fahrici. They wanted to have him back, as they then saw the matter. Mikail and Meryem Fahrici refused this request firmly, but Cemil Hayik's parents persisted with their request, so that what Meryem Fahrici called "interminable discussions" ensued.

Cemil Hayik's family continued to take a friendly, even affectionate, interest in Cemil Fahrici as he grew up. They came to visit him often, bringing gifts, and they were still doing this in 1967. In 1970 he and they were still exchanging gifts.

Cemil Fahrici's Birthmarks

Cemil Fahrici had a prominent birthmark on the right side of his neck under his mandible. In 1967 it was an area of scarring with alopecia, about 2 centimeters long and 1 centimeter wide (Figure 10-1).

Meryem Fahrici said that when Cemil Fahrici was born, this area under his chin bled like a wound. They took him to the hospital, where the area was stitched. It did not heal for about a month.[6]

Sabri Fahrici and Besime Fahrici Erkek, Cemil Fahrici's older siblings, both recalled that Cemil had been born with a bleeding birthmark on the neck, although Besime incorrectly indicated that it was on the left side of the neck. Haydar Elçi observed the birthmark on Cemil Fahrici's neck when he was about a year old.

Between 1967 and 1970, Reşat Bayer and I thought that Cemil Fahrici had only one birthmark. But in 1970 Rüzane Hayik Yıldırım described vividly how the

[6]Besime Fahrici Erkek (Cemil Fahrici's older sister) said that the birthmark under his chin bled for 7 years, a much longer time than his mother had said. She also said that Cemil suffered from toothache in the general area of the birthmark and that the growth of his teeth seemed impaired there. Perhaps after the wound had closed in his infancy an area of sensitivity remained, and if he scratched it, bleeding would occur.

Figure 10-3 Birthmark on the scalp (left parietal region) of Cemil Fahrici in 1970. It was a linear area of alopecia. This mark corresponded to the wound of exit in Cemil Hayik. It was about 2 centimeters long and 2 millimeters wide.

bullet that had killed her brother had exited at the top of the skull and lifted out a part of its bone. When I heard this description, it occurred to me that Cemil Fahrici ought to have had a second birthmark corresponding to the exit wound on the head of Cemil Hayik.

Reşat Bayer and I immediately went back to Cemil Fahrici and asked him if he had another birthmark. He said that he did have a second birthmark, and, without hesitating, he pointed to the top of his head. With little difficulty, I found a substantial linear area of alopecia in the left parietal area of the scalp (Figure 10-3). It was about 2 centimeters long and 2 millimeters wide.

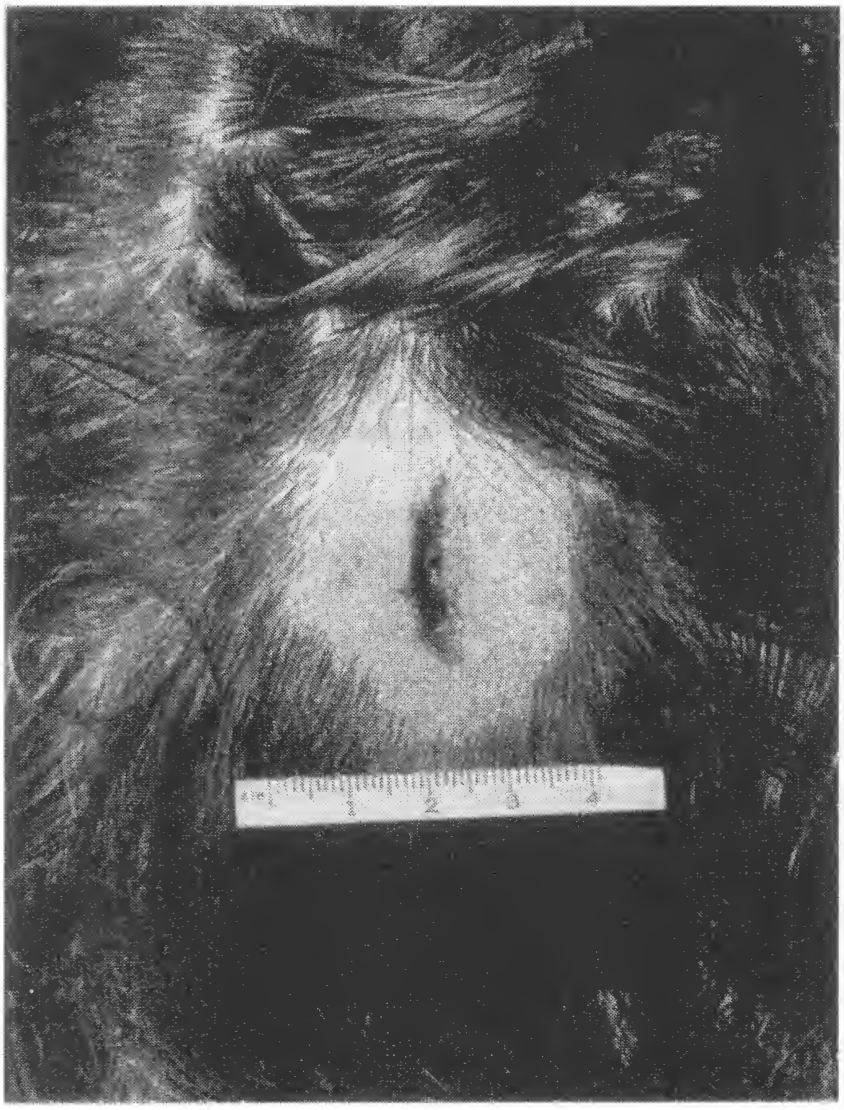

Figure 10-4 Exit wound (at the top of the skull) of a gunshot injury in a person murdered in North Carolina. (Courtesy of William K. Brinkhous, Office of the Chief Medical Examiner, North Carolina.)

Although Cemil Fahrici asserted firmly that he had had this second mark when he was born, I wanted to confirm this. He himself could hardly have known about the existence of either birthmark by normal means until he was out of infancy, and probably considerably older. Yet he said that he knew of its existence when he was a boy. Unfortunately, at the time we discovered the second mark on his head, Meryem Fahrici was ill so that we could not interview her again; and she died early in 1971. None of the other informants for the birthmark under Cemil Fahrici's chin could remember that he also had a birthmark at the top of his head. Sabri Fahrici at first said that he remembered this birthmark, but then withdrew his assertion. (He also changed his testimony on other, less important matters, and I generally considered him less than desirably reliable in what he said.) My other

two principal informants for Cemil Fahrici's birthmarks—Besime Fahrici Erkek (Cemil's older sister) and Haydar Elçi—could not recall that they had seen a birthmark on the top of Cemil's head.

I can imagine that the birthmark on Cemil's neck would easily be better remembered than the one at the top of his head. The former bled for some days and required surgical attention. The latter may not have bled or oozed; if it had done so, I think that it would have remained more prominent in the minds of informants, especially Meryem Fahrici. Furthermore, the growth of Cemil's hair would have covered it over within a few months, at most, of his birth.

Nevertheless, we are left with Cemil Fahrici as the sole informant for the presence of the second mark at his birth. How confident can we be that he did not confuse this mark with an acquired one? Two details of information incline me to believe that this hairless area on the top of his head is a birthmark and not the scar of an acquired injury. First, when I asked Cemil whether he had had a second birthmark, he unhesitatingly pointed to the top of his head. The spontaneity of his gesture convinced me that he truly believed that the hairless area there was a birthmark. Second, in May 1976, when Reşat Bayer met Cemil Fahrici, he took additional photographs of the birthmarks. At this time he discovered another, smaller, round hairless area near the larger and longer one shown in Figure 10-3. In March 1977, I examined both these marks myself. At this time Cemil Fahrici recalled that he had fallen and hurt his head a year earlier. He remembered that his scalp bled after this injury, and he thought the smaller, round hairless area derived from this recent injury. Cemil Fahrici may not have mentioned the injury to Reşat Bayer because Reşat Bayer did not ask him about the cause of this second, smaller lesion. I can tell this from Reşat Bayer's report to me in a letter that he wrote me on June 19, 1976. Cemil Fahrici repeated in 1977 his assertion that he knew from his childhood that he had a birthmark on the top of the head as well as one on his neck. I believe this is true.

Figure 10-4 shows the exit wound at the scalp of a fatal gunshot wound in a person killed in North Carolina. The linear exit wound closely resembles the birthmark at the top of Cemil Fahrici's head (Figure 10-3).

The question now arises of the correspondence between the two birthmarks on Cemil Fahrici and the wounds on the neck and head of Cemil Hayik. Three of my informants gave concordant testimony concerning the wounds on Cemil Hayik. These were: Haydar Elçi, who said he had been one of the first of the French gendarmes to enter the house where the two Hayik brothers had been besieged; Ahmet Yılmaz, a former soldier in the French Army, who claimed to have seen Cemil Hayik's dead body from a distance of 20 meters; and Cemil Hayik's sister, Rüzane, who said she had examined the body from a distance of 1 meter. All agreed that the wounds on Cemil Hayik showed that the bullet had entered at his neck and left through the top of the skull.

A critical reader may now suppose that informants for the wounds on Cemil Hayik harmonized their accounts of these to agree with the location of the birthmarks on Cemil Fahrici. Perhaps they did this for the birthmark on Cemil Fahrici's neck, but neither of the two principal informants for Cemil Hayik's

Figure 10-5 Presumed trajectory of the bullet that killed Cemil Hayik.

wounds—Rüzane Yıldırım and Haydar Elçi—knew about a birthmark on the top of Cemil Fahrici's head that corresponded with the wound they described on the top of Cemil Hayik's head. (I did not ask Ahmet Yılmaz about this detail.)

Figure 10-5 provides an artist's sketch of the trajectory of the bullet through the head of Cemil Hayik, based on the assumption that Cemil Fahrici's birthmarks correspond to Cemil Hayik's wounds.

Cemil Fahrici said he had never suffered from any discomfort in his throat. He did not mention to us the toothaches that Besime Fahrici Erkek had said he suffered from in childhood. He *had* suffered from headaches. I have already mentioned them and believe they were concomitants of anxiety that he had experienced in the presence of blood. There is no reason to think that they were a physical expression of residues from the bullet that killed Cemil Hayik.

Comments on the Evidence of Paranormal Processes in the Case

I have already discounted down to a negligible value nearly all of Cemil Fahrici's statements about the life of Cemil Hayik. The one matter on which he may have told something not known to everyone in Antakya is unverifiable. I refer to his claim that Cemil Hayik, at the end of the shoot-out with the police, first killed his brother, İbrahim, and then killed himself.

The strength of the case rests, therefore, almost entirely on the correspondence in location between Cemil Fahrici's birthmarks and the wounds on Cemil Hayik. I consider this correspondence adequately close.

Given Cemil Fahrici's belief that he was Cemil Hayik reborn, his strong identification with Cemil Hayik is not a paranormal feature of the case. Nevertheless, we should not minimize the importance of this identification. Cemil Fahrici was one of a small number of subjects who have insisted so vehemently on being called by the name of the previous personality that their parents have changed their names officially. Cemil Fahrici's attitude toward policemen was unusual in his family, and it accorded with Cemil Hayik's behavior.

Cemil Fahrici's Later Development

Cemil Fahrici continued to live a healthy, tranquil life during the years when I knew him. He prospered as a baker and became able to employ an assistant.

When I last met him, in March 1977, he said that he had forgotten none of the memories he had about the life of Cemil Hayik. Here he may have exaggerated somewhat, because I had already learned that he had earlier forgotten some of the memories. However, I also believe that he had retained many others.

Note on Another Candidate to be Cemil Hayik Reborn

In 1984 Dr. Can Polat (who had been studying cases in Turkey on my behalf) sent me notes about the case of a man called Sabri Aynaci who said he was the reincarnation of Cemil Hayik. Sabri Aynaci was born in a village near Antakya in 1938. At his birth he had a large birthmark at the top of his head (but no other), and Dr. Polat sent me a photograph of it. He said that as a child he had memories of the life of Cemil Hayik, and both his mother and a brother said that he had talked about being Cemil Hayik when he was a child. (His father had died before 1984.) None of Dr. Polat's three informants remembered more than a few details of what Sabri Aynaci had said when young. Some of the details they did remember were correct for Cemil Hayik, but others were not. Sabri Aynaci and his family made no effort to contact members of Cemil Hayik's family, and they knew nothing about Cemil Fahrici's case.

We are unlikely now to learn more about Sabri Aynaci's case, and it may be rash to offer any interpretation of it without more information than we have. However, at the time of Sabri Aynaci's birth (1938) and when he was beginning to talk, Cemil Hayik's legendary fame had not diminished. If Sabri Aynaci had a prominent birthmark and if he began referring to a previous life as a bandit, adults around him might have suggested that he had been Cemil Hayik. He might then have assimilated this name and other normally acquired information to memories he had of the life of some other bandit. I have observed a process of this kind in other cases. For example, Necati Çaylak made more than 20 correct statements about a previous life, but gave the wrong family name for the previous personality; and Kenedi Alkan's father seems to have imposed an identification on his son with a well-known person, President John F. Kennedy.

It may be said that a similar process might have led to the development of Cemil Fahrici's case. In cases with announcing dreams and in some with birthmarks, parents and other adults may quickly identify a particular deceased person as being reincarnated in a newborn child. We are far from knowing the extent to which parents can impose such an identification on a child. The parents of Sabri Aynaci had at hand the same information about Cemil Hayik that Cemil Fahrici's parents had. Why should the latter's case have developed so richly in details, whereas that of the former remained meager in them? We did not have an opportunity to study each case when the subjects were young children. When the cases were investigated, Cemil Fahrici was a little over 30 years old and Sabri Aynaci about 46. The great difference in the details the informants for the two cases remembered could be partly explained by some forgetting on the part of Sabri Aynaci's mother and brother; but I do not think this would explain all the difference between the two cases in abundance of details. Did some of the difference lie in the greater enthusiasm and effort devoted to influencing their son on the part of Cemil Fahrici's parents compared with those of Sabri Aynaci? Or was Cemil Fahrici more suggestible—more malleable in the formation of his behavior, we might say—than Sabri Aynaci?

My own opinion is that Cemil Fahrici had memories of the life of Cemil Hayik and that if anyone should be regarded as the reincarnation of Cemil Hayik it is he. If this is correct, then the case of Sabri Aynaci belongs in the same category as that of Kenedi Alkan, which is that of cases developed by self-deceiving parents.

THE CASE OF SEMIR TACİ

Summary of the Case and Its Investigation

Semir Taci was born in Antakya, Turkey, on July 5, 1945. His parents were Edip Taci and his wife, Mediha. They had altogether 10 children; although I learned that Semir was not the oldest son, I do not know his place in order of birth among his siblings. Edip Taci owned a small factory for the manufacture of rope and twine in Antakya.

Semir had birthmarks on his right hand (Figure 10-6). His parents told me first that they noticed these immediately after his birth, but later they said they did not examine his hand until after he had begun to speak about a previous life.

Semir began speaking about a previous life when he was between 3 and 4 years old. He said that he had two mothers, one of whom was "large" and one "small," and that his name was Sekip. He also said that he had a wife and children and that he had been bitten by a poisonous snake on his thumb. His parents had known a man, Sekip Karşanbaş, who had been killed by the bite of a poisonous snake about 2 weeks before Semir's birth. Sekip had been raised and befriended by Edip Taci's father. The statements Semir was making corresponded with facts in Sekip's life and death. Semir eagerly wanted to visit the previous family, and, stand-

Figure 10-6 Right thumb of Semir Taci as it appeared in 1976, when he was 31 years old. The larger of the birthmarks was an area of hypertrophic scarring near the interphalangeal joint. There was another similar but smaller birthmark distal to the first one.

ing in the street outside his house, he indicated with his finger the direction of the house where he said he had lived. His parents then let him go to this house, accompanied by his sister. He led her there and met Sekip Karşanbaş's mother, although not for the first time, as I shall explain. He also met one of Sekip's daughters.

Semir's parents became concerned—even frightened—about the possible harmful effects of his memories on him. They decided they should take measures to make him forget the previous life. So when he was about 5 years old, they gave him candy that had previously been partially eaten by someone else, thus having another

person's saliva on it.[7] Semir's family thought this remedy had the desired effect; but this is doubtful, because he told me (in 1967, when he was 22) that he thought his memories had not diminished at all from what they had been when he was a young child. (It seemed to me, however, that they had lost some of their earlier clarity.)

This case first came to my attention during my first visit to Antakya in 1967. Reşat Bayer and I went there to study other cases we had heard about, and someone informed us about the present case. A little later, we happened to pass Semir's mother, Mediha Taci, in the street, and the informant who had told us about the case (and who was then with us) introduced us to her. We asked about the case, and, to our surprise, she denied that there was any such case and professed not to know what we were talking about.

That evening Semir's father, accompanied by Semir and another son, came to our hotel and said that there certainly was a case and that they were willing to talk about it. After we had taken their testimony, they invited us to come the following day to their house, and we there met Semir's mother, who then willingly gave her evidence in the case.

Semir's parents volunteered no explanation for his mother's earlier denying the existence of the case, and it seemed tactless to ask directly why she had done this. I therefore did not raise the subject at that time. Several years later, when I knew the family better, I ventured to broach the matter with Edip Taci. He then explained that his wife had thought that we—Reşat Bayer and I—were some kind of government agents. It had seemed prudent to her to get rid of us by the quickest method, which was that of denying the existence of the case that we were enquiring about.

In 1967 I also began investigating Sekip Karşanbaş's side of the case by having interviews with his widow and one of his daughters.

In March 1970, I resumed investigation of the case. I interviewed Semir and his father again, had another interview with Sekip Karşanbaş's widow, and also interviewed for the first time another of his daughters, whom I had not met before. A year later, in March 1971, Reşat Bayer and I interviewed Semir and his parents again.

I have not myself met any members of Semir's family since 1971. However, Reşat Bayer, on a visit to Antakya in 1976, met Semir's older brother, Abdülgani, and recorded a statement from him. He also obtained some new photographs of Semir's birthmarks, two of which I have reproduced in this report.

In 1981 Ertan Kura, at my request, arranged to meet Semir again for a follow-up interview. No new details about the case emerged at this meeting, but we learned that Semir no longer had any imaged memories of the previous life.

Some readers may consider that Mediha Taci's lying about the existence of the case discredits the testimony that she gave about it the following day. However, her behavior in this respect can also be taken as evidence that she was

[7]This is a method employed in Turkey for dulling the memories of previous lives when it is thought undesirable for a child to recall one. I have learned of its application in other cases. Cemil Fahrici's parents used a variation of this method in an effort to suppress his memories.

not pushing the case forward. I formed the same impression of Semir's father. He had heard of our investigations and simply decided that he could be of service to us in making available the facts of the case; and so he came with his sons to the hotel in order to tell us about it.

Persons Interviewed during the Investigation of the Case

In Antakya I interviewed:

Semir Taci
Edip Taci, Semir's father
Mediha Taci, Semir's mother
Feride Karşanbaş, Sekip Karşanbaş's wife
Ezdihar Karşanbaş Arat, Sekip Karşanbaş's daughter
Naime Karşanbaş Özöğlu, Sekip Karşanbaş's daughter

In İskenderun I interviewed:

Semire Taci Akgün, Semir's older sister

In addition to the above, Reşat Bayer interviewed (in 1976) Semir's older brother, Abdülgani Taci. Abdülgani Taci was born in 1941 and was therefore only 4 years older than Semir. In 1976 he was recalling what Semir had said more than 25 years earlier, and he may not have been a firsthand witness of the statements he remembered that Semir had made.

Verdi Karşanbaş, Sekip Karşanbaş's mother, had died by the time I investigated the case.

Relevant Facts of Geography and Previous Acquaintance between the Families Concerned

The two families both lived in Antakya in houses within 50 meters of each other. Sekip Karşanbaş was a foster-brother of Edip Taci. The families knew each other well. Semir Taci should not be credited (and was not by his family) with any knowledge about Sekip Karşanbaş that was unknown to his parents.

The acquaintance between the two families does not mean that Semir necessarily derived his knowledge about Sekip Karşanbaş's life and death from overhearing conversations in his family. Edip Taci said they had not talked about Sekip's death in front of Semir. He added, that even if they had done so, Semir, at his young age, would not have understood what they were talking about. (I do not expect every reader to agree with this last statement, and I am not sure that I do myself.)

The Life, Death, and Character of Sekip Karşanbaş

Sekip Karşanbaş had been raised by Edip Taci's father. Edip Taci was fond of his foster-brother without having an intense affection for him. In adulthood,

Sekip Karşanbaş married and had eight children. He remained extremely poor all his life. He worked in a café. He got along badly with his wife, who said that he tended to drink too much rakı (the strong distilled alcoholic beverage of Turkey). She used to reproach him with bringing home more alcohol than bread; he, for his part, blamed her for neglecting his mother.

Feride Karşanbaş gave the following account of her husband's death. On the day of his being bitten by a snake they had quarreled. He became angry, threw a plate of food on the ground, and went off to a bakery shop. Someone there said that he had seen a snake on the floor of another shop. Sekip Karşanbaş undertook to kill the snake. He boldly picked it up, and it bit him. (Feride surmised that her husband was probably intoxicated at the time.) After Sekip had been bitten, he ran home to his wife. She remembered that he was holding one hand in the other, and one of his hands was bleeding. She could not recall with certainty which hand was bleeding, but thought it was the right hand. Sekip was taken to the hospital, where he died.

Edip Taci added some further details about Sekip's handling of the snake. He said that Sekip was drunk at the time and believed that he would have an immunity to snake venom that some hocas (holy men in Turkey) are alleged to have after they have taken alcohol.[8]

On March 23, 1970, Reşat Bayer and I went to the Government Hospital, Antakya, where we examined the admission records of Sekip Karşanbaş. He entered the hospital on June 23, 1945, and died the following day, June 24. The hospital record stated that he "had been bitten by a snake on the fingers of the right hand and on those of the left hand."

The snake that bit Sekip Karşanbaş is known locally simply as the "mountain snake." It was almost certainly an Ottoman viper, *Vipera xanthina*, which is found in Turkey.

I did not learn exactly how old Sekip Karşanbaş was when he died. Edip Taci said that he was between 40 and 50 years old.

Edip Taci remembered Sekip as a person whose only major fault was drinking alcohol too much. He was intelligent, calm, and honest. He was notably fond of music.

The Interval between Sekip's Death and Semir's Birth. I think we can take as accurate the hospital record for the date of Sekip's death: June 24, 1945. Semir's identity card, which we examined, gave his date of birth as July 5, 1945. Edip Taci said that he had Semir's birth recorded on the day he was born. I think, therefore, that we should probably accept it also as accurate. However, I have some reservations about the date of birth. The interval of 11 days between Sekip's death and Semir's birth is considerably less than two informants remembered. Edip himself said in 1967 that the interval was 3 months, although in 1970 he

[8]Other subjects who remembered previous lives that ended, directly or indirectly, because of excessive consumption of alcohol include Henry Demmert III, Necip Ünlütaşkıran, Ronald Mapatunage, Sujith Lakmal Jayaratne, Narong Yensiri, and Mahes de Silva.

trimmed this to "at the most, a month." Ezdihar Arat, disclaiming certitude in the matter, thought that Semir was born about 4½ months after her father's death.

An Announcing Dream

Ezdihar Arat, Sekip Karşanbaş's daughter, told me that her grandmother, Verdi Karşanbaş, had a dream in which Sekip appeared to her and said that she should not cry over him any more because he had been reborn at Mediha's and that she should come to visit him often there. Ezdihar thought her grandmother had this dream about 3 months after the death of her father and that Semir Taci was born about 1½ months *after* the dream. But this interval is unlikely to be correct for the reasons I gave in the preceding section. Moreover, if we accept Ezdihar's chronology, the dream occurred after Semir's conception, but before his birth. Therefore, her report of the content of her grandmother's dream and her chronology are inconsistent. Her mother, Feride Karşanbaş, told us about a dream that she said her mother-in-law had had *after* Semir's birth. According to her recollection of this dream, Sekip had said to his mother that she should not cry over him because he had been reborn "in this area, at his uncle's house." (In the loose usage of some Turks, Sekip could properly refer to his foster-father [Edip Taci's father] as his "uncle.") I believe this dream is almost certainly the same as that reported by Ezdihar Arat. Feride Karşanbaş said her mother-in-law's dream stimulated her to go to see Semir, a visit that I describe in the following section.

The First Meetings of the Two Families after the Birth of Semir Taci

As I have already mentioned, the two families concerned in this case knew each other well before Semir Taci's birth. On the basis of the announcing dream of Verdi Karşanbaş, which included instructions to visit the baby often, members of the Karşanbaş family went to visit the Taci family and see the baby when he was still "in arms." These members of the Karşanbaş family included Sekip's mother, Verdi, and his wife, Feride. They took Semir to the area where Sekip Karşanbaş had lived; but they did not take him into the house, because they were afraid that if they did so he might become ill and even die.

Following these first meetings, members of the Karşanbaş family saw Semir again from time to time during his infancy, but always at the home of a friend, never at either the Taci or the Karşanbaş home. The Karşanbaş family had an interest in Semir, believing that he was Sekip reborn. At these showings of Semir, Sekip's mother would hold him in her arms, and I give some information about his reaction to this later. It is possible that at these times Semir overheard comments exhanged between the two families that could have entered later into the information included in the statements he made when he began speaking about Sekip's life. These meetings seem to have stopped as Semir emerged from infancy.

Semir was between 3 and 4 when he began speaking about the previous life, saying, as I mentioned earlier, that his name was Sekip and that he had two moth-

ers. One day his maternal grandfather asked him if he knew the way to the house he said he had lived in. At this, Semir seized his grandfather's hand, led him out to the street, and pointed in the direction of the Karşanbaş house. His grandfather then returned inside their own house, but Semir, accompanied by his sister,[9] went to the house of Sekip Karşanbaş's mother, finding his way unaided. There he saw and recognized Sekip Karşanbaş's mother.[10]

Semir told us that he subsequently met the children of Sekip Karşanbaş and convinced them he was their father reborn by showing them the birthmark at the place on the thumb where the snake had bitten their father. I did not enquire about this meeting when talking with Sekip's two daughters.

Statements and a Recognition Made by Semir

In Table 10-1 I have listed all the statements that informants said Semir had made about the previous life when he was a young child. I have also included in Table 10-1 Semir's recognition of Sekip Karşanbaş's house when he was between 3½ and 4 years old; but we should attach little importance to this recognition, because Semir might have learned normally where the house was; and, as I have mentioned, he had been taken into the area before.

Semir's Behavior Related to the Previous Life

Circumstances and Manner of Semir's Speaking about the Previous Life. I learned little about Semir's manner of speaking about the previous life. He spoke of it often when he was a young child. Mediha Taci said that Semir was saying "all the time" that his name was Sekip. However, he never asked that other persons call him Sekip.

Semir's Attitudes toward the Members of Sekip Karşanbaş's Family. Feride Karşanbaş said that when Semir was an infant, he would cry when held in his mother's arms, but he would stop crying when Sekip's mother, Verdi Karşanbaş, held him. She also said that Semir cried when she (Feride) held him,

[9]In 1970 Semire Akgün (Semir's older sister) remembered his talking as a child about the previous life and wanting to show the house where Sekip had lived. However, she said that he led his grandfather there, not herself. This disagreed with what Edip Taci (her father) and Semir both said: that he had led *her* to the previous house, not his grandfather. Possibly another of Semir's sisters figured in this episode.

[10]I was shown the two houses formerly inhabited by the two families, each of which had moved since the time of this episode. They were only about 50 meters apart, but the houses in this section of Antakya were built close together on narrow streets and alleys. There were plenty of other surrounding houses with which the boy might have confused the house he was trying to find. In evaluating this episode, however, we must remember that as a small baby Semir Taci had been taken in arms to the area of the house and had also then seen Sekip Karşanbaş's mother. From this infantile experience he might conceivably have retained memories both of the way to find the house and of Verdi Karşanbaş.

Table 10-1. **Summary of Statements and a Recognition Made by Semir**

Item	*Informants*	*Verification*	*Comments*
1. His name was Sekip.	Mediha Taci, Semir's mother Edip Taci, Semir's father Abdülgani Taci, Semir's older brother	Edip Taci Feride Karşanbaş, Sekip Karşanbaş's wife	Edip Taci was a foster-brother of Sekip Karşanbaş, who had been raised by Edip Taci's father. I have some doubt concerning whether Abdülgani, who was only 4 years older than Semir, was a firsthand witness of the statements he remembered.
2. He had a mother named Verdi.	Edip Taci	Edip Taci	
3. Verdi was "bigger" than his mother, Mediha.	Edip Taci	Feride Karşanbaş	Semir appears to have used a word referring to size, but Edip Taci was sure that he meant to convey the idea that the mother of the previous life was older than his mother. Verdi Karşanbaş was, however, according to one informant, bigger (as well as older) than Mediha Taci.
4. He had a wife called Feride.	Abdülgani Taci Edip Taci	Feride Karşanbaş	Mediha Taci recalled that Semir had given the name of the previous wife, but she did not mention the name to us.
5. He had a son called Ahmet.	Mediha Taci Edip Taci Abdülgani Taci	Feride Karşanbaş	

6. He had a son called Hasip.	Mediha Taci Edip Taci Abdülgani Taci	Feride Karşanbaş	
7. He had a son called Riyad.	Abdülgani Taci	Feride Karşanbaş	
8. He had a daughter called Naime.	Abdülgani Taci Mediha Taci Edip Taci	Feride Karşanbaş Naime Karşanbaş Özöğlu, Sekip Karşanbaş's daughter	
9. He had a daughter called Ezdihar.	Edip Taci	Feride Karşanbaş Ezdihar Karşanbaş Arat, Sekip Karşanbaş's daughter	
10. He had a daughter called Kâtibe.	Edip Taci	Feride Karşanbaş	
11. His wife did not treat him well.	Abdülgani Taci	Edip Taci	Edip Taci, who knew Sekip Karşanbaş well, said that Sekip had been displeased with his wife's neglect of his mother. Feride Karşanbaş said that she and her husband "often quarreled."
12. A snake bit him on the thumb.	Mediha Taci Abdülgani Taci	Records of the Government Hospital, Antakya	Abdülgani Taci said that Semir had referred only to having been bitten "on the hand." The hospital records stated that a snake had bitten Sekip Karşanbaş on the fingers; the thumb was not specifically mentioned.

Table 10-1. *(continued)*

Item	*Informants*	*Verification*	*Comments*
13. He was in a bakery shop when he was bitten.	Abdülgani Taci	Incorrect	Sekip Karşanbaş was at a bakery shop when he learned about the snake; but the snake was in another shop nearby.
14. He worked in this bakery.	Abdülgani Taci	Unverified	
15. Recognition of Sekip Karşanbaş's house	Edip Taci		Semir's maternal grandfather asked him whether he knew the house of the previous life. Semir thereupon led his grandfather into the street and pointed with his finger in the direction of Sekip Karşanbaş's house. It was about 50 meters away. Semir was about 3½ or 4 years old at the time. He had, however, been carried to this house when he was an infant.

and she attributed this to the bad relationship she had had with her husband. Edip Taci confirmed that Semir cried when Feride Karşanbaş held him, but he said that he also cried when Verdi Karşanbaş (Sekip's mother) held him. Verdi herself had died by the time I investigated the case, and I did not question other informants on this topic.

My informants agreed concerning Semir's attitude toward Sekip's children. He always showed pleasure when he saw them, and sometimes, if he had been crying, the sight of them would dry his tears. Semir's older sister, Semire, said that one day when she was on the street with Semir, who was then only about 2 years old, he let go of her hand and ran toward some children. She asked him why he was running to them, and he explained that they were "his" children. They were in fact Sekip Karşanbaş's children.

As Semir became older, he overcame his fear of Feride Karşanbaş—if fear is what his crying in her arms as an infant expressed—and he enjoyed visiting her. He had continued to visit her, and also Sekip Karşanbaş's children, up to the time of my investigation of the case, when he was in his 20s.

Semir's Phobia of Snakes. Edip Taci said that Semir had a pronounced fear of snakes. Edip had never actually had occasion to watch Semir's reaction to a live snake. (It must have been unusual for a viper to come into the city in the 1940s, and even more so later.) But he had heard Semir often refer to his fear of snakes. Semir was different from his brothers in this respect. Semir confirmed to me that he was still afraid of snakes at the age of 22.

Feride Karşanbaş said that Semir, when he was young, had been afraid of earthworms and insects. No other informant mentioned such additional fears on the part of Semir.

Semir's Attitude toward Alcohol. Edip Taci told me that Semir never drank rakı; he only drank wine, and that moderately. Semir told me (in 1970) that he did sometimes drink rakı, but had little interest in it.

Other Behavior of Semir Related to the Previous Life. Semir's father said that he was interested in music and implied that this interest derived from Sekip Karşanbaş's interest in music. But I did not learn whether Semir and Sekip were exceptional for their families in their interest in music. One of Semir's brothers played the guitar.

The Attitudes of the Adults Concerned toward Semir's Memories

I have already mentioned the concern that Semir's parents had about the possible harmfulness of his memories and the measures—futile, I think—that they took to make him forget them. There was, however, nothing in what he was saying about the previous life to which they took exception. Nor did they seem in any way to have exploited the case. After Semir's mother denied its existence to us, his father presented it to us in the hope of assisting our research.

The members of Sekip's family appear to have wholeheartedly accepted Semir's claim to be Sekip reborn. They gave him gifts and continued to do so until

Figure 10-7 Right index finger of Semir Taci. The linear scarlike birthmark was near the base of the finger. This photograph was taken in 1971.

he was 7 or 8 years old. They welcomed the continuing relationship that he wished to have with them.

Semir's Birthmarks

In 1967 Semir Taci's parents both said that when he was born he had a wound—as they described it—on his right thumb. The wound did not bleed, and it seemed that the area merely had a defect in the skin where the tissues beneath were visible. Subsequently, the wound closed up, and only two hypertropic scars, presumably corresponding to the marks made by the bite of the snake, remained. Their appearance in 1976 is shown in Figure 10-6. There was a similar scarlike mark on Semir's right index finger (Figure 10-7).

Semir said that when he was young the site of the birthmarks itched markedly, although it was not painful. His mother, Mediha Taci, confirmed that Semir had often rubbed his thumb up to the age of about 4½ years.

Mediha Taci did not see the dead body of Sekip Karşanbaş, although his funeral procession passed in front of their house. But she would naturally have heard of the manner of his death from her husband; and he had seen Sekip's wounds.

When I talked with Feride Karşanbaş in 1967, she did not mention that her husband had been taken to a hospital, and I assumed that Sekip had died at home. However, in my second interview with her in 1970, she said that he had been taken to the hospital and had died there. Reşat Bayer and I accordingly went to the Government Hospital in Antakya, from the records of which I have already quoted the most pertinent passage. It states that the snake had bitten Sekip on the fingers of *both* hands. But Semir and his parents had only spoken of birthmarks on his *right* hand, and Semir had shown us only his right hand. It did not occur to me at first to examine Semir's left hand also. I found it difficult to imagine how a snake could bite a person who tried to pick it up on *both* hands, unless the person changed the hands of his grip on the snake. However, Sekip, who was drunk at the time, may have done this. Or he may have seized the snake's body too far from its head, so that it was able to turn its head and bite the hand holding it. At any rate, after I read the medical record, I thought that we should examine Semir's left hand in order to see whether he had birthmarks on it as well as on his right hand. Semir then showed us scarlike marks on the index finger of his left hand (Figures 10-8 and 10-9) that closely resembled those on his right thumb and index finger.

The question then arose of whether the marks on the left index finger were congenital like those on the right index finger and thumb. At first Semir himself was not positive that the marks on his left index finger were congenital, but later he decided definitely that they had been present at his birth. Because he was not the best witness for such a matter, we decided to consult his parents, and we interviewed them again in March 1971. Neither of them had noticed a birthmark on his left hand. They now also changed their earlier testimony concerning when they had first observed the birthmarks on Semir's right hand. Contrary to what they had told me in 1967, they now said that they had not examined his right hand until he began to talk about the previous life at the age of about 3. Mediha Taci said that because Semir only talked about being bitten on the right hand, they had only examined it and not the left hand. Edip Taci thought that Semir had no birthmarks except those on the right thumb. Although Semir's parents varied their statements about his age when they first noted the marks on his right thumb, they at no time suggested that these were anything but congenital.

The marks on Semir's right thumb were larger than those on the right index finger and left index finger; but all the marks had an identical appearance. They were slightly elevated and the skin over them was smoother than that of surrounding tissues; in short, they had the appearance of small keloid scars. It seems to me that they probably all had the same origin. If they were not congenital, they were acquired since Semir's birth; but I think it unlikely that Semir could have been injured to the extent necessary to produce such scars—as we should call them if

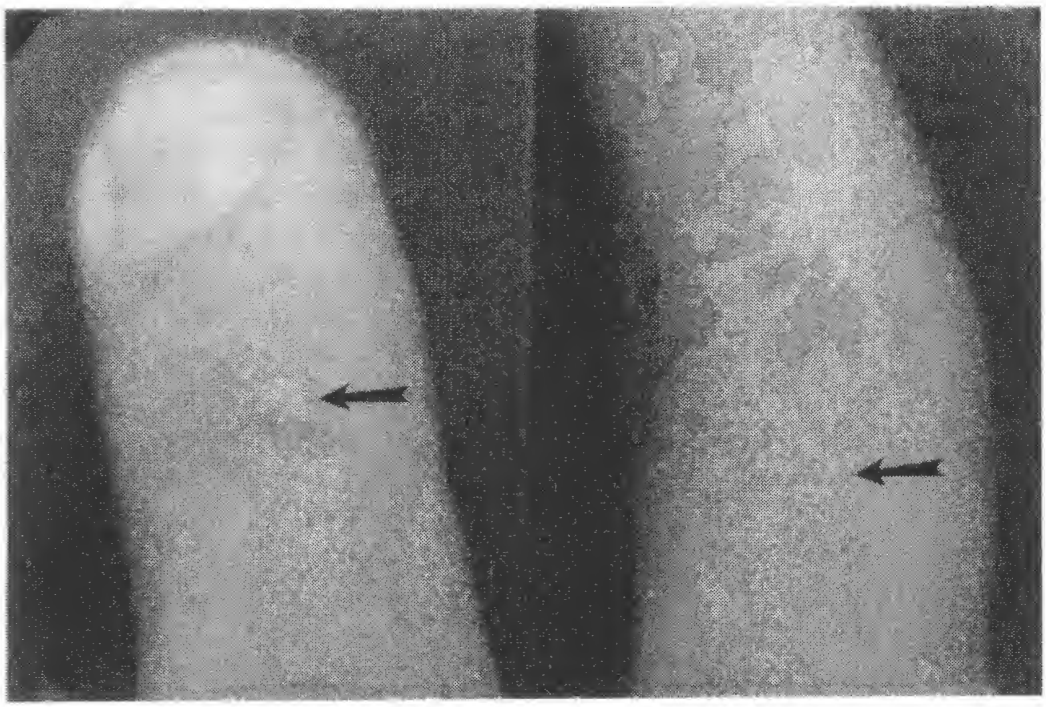

Figure 10-8 Two parts of Semir Taci's left index finger as it appeared in 1971. The photograph on the left shows the distal part of the finger, that on the right a part around the first interphalangeal joint. The (probable) birthmarks were areas of pale, slightly elevated scar-like tissue.

Figure 10-9 Dorsal view of Semir Taci's left hand as it appeared in 1976. The birthmark near the first interphalangeal joint that was visible in 1971 cannot be seen in this photograph. That over the distal interphalangeal joint was still visible, but had faded considerably.

they were the result of postnatal wounds—without his parents remembering that he had received injuries severe enough to result in scars. I believe therefore that the marks on all three fingers were congenital.

Comments on the Evidence of Paranormal Processes in the Case

Apart from the birthmarks, this case contains nothing that we should consider evidence of a paranormal process. The two families concerned in the case knew each other well, and Semir said nothing about Sekip and his family that his own family did not already know.

For those who believe that narrations about a previous life are devised by parents in order to account for birthmarks (on subjects who have them), it is worth mentioning that the life of Sekip Karşanbaş did not provide a hero's model. His life was lackluster and his death—from an act of drunken folly—unadmirable. Even a young child could think of a happier life and a nobler death if he wanted to account for marks that suggested snakebites.

Semir's Later Development

In 1967 Semir said that he had preserved all the memories of the previous life that he had earlier had. (I do not necessarily credit this claim.) He still had a marked phobia of snakes.

In 1970 Semir's phobia of snakes was persisting. I did not question him about fading of his memories. He was then working in his father's rope and twine factory. He married that year.

In 1971 I met Semir only briefly, but learned that he was then no longer visiting the Karşanbaş family.

In 1981, when Ertan Kura met Semir, he said that he no longer had any of his primary imaged memories of the previous life. He was able to give Ertan Kura a secondhand account of his own case derived, he said, from what his parents had told him.

THE CASE OF UMAR KHAN

Introduction

This case has little detail, but it deserves inclusion because after examining one birthmark, I was able to predict that we would find a second one. When I examined the subject's most prominent birthmark (Figure 10-10) (which was pointed out to me), I thought that it had the appearance of a birthmark corresponding to a bullet wound of exit. I thought there might be a smaller birthmark corresponding to a wound of entry. I examined the subject's head further and discovered a second birthmark (Figure 10-11), which was indeed small and round as birthmarks corresponding to wounds of entry usually are.

Figure 10-10 Birthmark on the parietal area of Umar Khan's head as it appeared in October 1979, when he was less than 3 years old. The birthmark was red-brown, hairless, and slightly puckered. It was ovoid in shape and measured approximately 1.5 centimeters by 1.2 centimeters.

Figure 10-11 Birthmark above the left ear of Umar Khan as it appeared in 1979, when he was less than 3 years old. It was pinkish brown, hairless, and slightly puckered. It was round in shape and measured about 5 millimeters in diameter.

The case has the additional interest of having occurred in a family of Sunni Moslems. Although Karanpur Chaudhri, the village where the case developed, has some families of low-caste Hindus, it is predominantly inhabited by Sunni Moslems, among most of whom the belief in reincarnation is still generally regarded as dangerously false. However, this attitude was not universal in Karanpur Chaudhri. Some of its residents made us (Dr. Satwant Pasricha and myself) feel entirely welcome, treated us as if we were sensible people, and even told us about other cases of which they had heard.

Summary of the Case and Its Investigation

Umar Khan was born in the village of Karanpur Chaudhri, which is just outside the limits of the city of Bareilly, Uttar Pradesh, India. His father was Naksu, but I never learned his mother's name.

We were told (in October 1979) that Umar Khan had become 2 years old in October 1979; but he looked a year older to Dr. Pasricha and me, and we judged him to be about 3 years old when we met him.

Umar's grandmother said that the midwife who delivered him noticed the large birthmark on the top of his head (Figure 10-10) and drew it to her attention. Its size and prominence led him to be given the nickname *Ganja*, which means "bald"; this is an exaggeration, since Umar had substantial hair, except in the areas of his birthmarks.

When Umar became able to speak, he made two statements suggestive of memories of a previous life.

Dr. Pasricha and I learned of this case when we were at the village of Karanpur Chaudhri on October 17, 1979, for the study of another case. Our information derives solely from interviews on that day with Umar's paternal grandparents and a neighbor.

Umar's mother, although present during the interviews (and quite willing to be photographed and to allow her son to be photographed), would give us no information—not even her own name; she probably feared being rebuked by her husband, who was out of the village, if she spoke about reincarnation with us.

Statements Made by Umar

When Umar became able to speak, he said that he had been a Kurmi in his previous life. Kurmis are a caste of Hindu cultivators, and although there were some Hindus in Karanpur Chaudhri, there were no Kurmis. Umar also once remarked: "I had my gun somewhere. I will bring it and shoot you." (We did not learn whom he intended to shoot.) He did not say how he had died in the previous life.

Umar's Behavior Related to the Previous Life

Umar refused to eat meat, behavior characteristic of vegetarian Hindus, but unknown among Moslems.

Conjectures about the Origin of Umar's First Birthmark and the Discovery of His Second One

Although I have said that the Moslem villagers of Karanpur Chaudhri did not believe in reincarnation, they could speculate about it nevertheless. When I asked Umar's grandmother what she had thought about the birthmark when the midwife pointed it out to her, she replied that (although she did not believe in reincarnation) it had occurred to her that Umar might be the reincarnation of someone who had been hit on the head in a previous life.

While we were talking with our informants for the case, I was appraising Umar's birthmark and decided that it might correspond to a gunshot wound of exit. I asked whether anyone in the village had been shot. I was told: "No. We are peaceful. If we fight we use lathis, and we do not kill each other."[11] I also asked whether Umar had a second birthmark, and Umar's grandmother said that they had not seen a second one. I then nevertheless explored Umar's head and discovered the mark shown in Figure 10-11. When we showed it to Umar's grandmother, she said that she had never noticed it before.

In response to questions about the first birthmark, Umar's grandmother said that it had been red when he was born, but it did not bleed or discharge.

Dr. Pasricha and I took photographs of Umar's birthmarks and also of him with various members of his family. We then went to study another case in the village. Before we left the village, we decided to talk again with Umar's grandmother. I thought we should press her on the question of whether the other mark had been present at the time of Umar's birth. (A small round mark of its appearance might have resulted from a healed furuncle.) Umar's grandmother, more affable now, changed her statement and said that both marks had been present at the time of Umar's birth. She denied that he had ever had a furuncle. Sensing that we did not know which of her two contradictory statements we should believe, she said that if we distrusted her (second) statement, the village midwife would confirm its truth. We said that we would like to talk with the midwife, but Umar's grandmother then declined to call her for us.

We could not stay longer in the village and left with our information in an unsatisfactory state of incompleteness.

Umar's Birthmarks

The birthmark on the top of Umar's head (Figure 10-10) was a red-brown hairless area. Its surface was slightly puckered. It was ovoid in shape and mea-

[11]Fighting with lathis is not a harmless pastime. I have studied in India numerous reports of autopsies made on the bodies of villagers killed with lathis (Figures 4-24 and 12-35). These reports were not all of the autopsies that interested us. In the course of searching for one record that we wanted, we sometimes would have to look at 10 or even 50 or more other records before we found that one. In this way we learned what a deadly weapon a lathi may be. The remark about fighting only with lathis said more about the poverty of the villagers of Karanpur Chaudhri than about their peacefulness. Even the crude "countrymade" pistols that the Indian villagers sometimes use in murder cost more than most villagers can afford to pay.

sured approximately 1.5 centimeters by 1.2 centimeters. The other mark was located about 4 centimeters superior to the left ear and slightly posterior to it (Figure 10-11). It was pinkish brown, hairless, and slightly puckered. It was round in shape and measured about 5 millimeters in diameter.

Comment

I think it possible that Umar said more about the previous life than we were told. It is unusual for the subjects of these cases not to mention the mode of death of the previous personality. His family may well have conjectured the identity of the person about whom he was talking, even if Umar had not mentioned that person's name. And they might have wished to conceal this name for personal reasons, such as a fear of reprisals by a murderer. This motive could have acted in harmony with their distaste for reincarnation on religious grounds. These conjectures may be wrong. In October 1979 Umar was hardly more than 3 at most; and he may have been younger. His grandfather said that he had not started speaking properly yet. It is possible that we had really learned everything that he had said about the previous life up to that time.

We have not verified that Umar was remembering the previous life of someone who was shot in the head. In suggesting that his two birthmarks corresponded to bullet wounds of entry and exit, I was—in violation of my own maxim—reasoning backward from the appearance of the birthmarks and conjecturing wounds to which they would correspond. In doing this I was using my knowledge of verified cases in which there has been a round, usually small birthmark corresponding to a wound of entry and, in some instances, another larger birthmark corresponding to a wound of exit.[12]

The birthmarks on Umar's head were located only about 8 centimeters apart, and I had some doubts about whether a bullet entering the skull above the left ear could exit in the parietal area. The case of Toran Singh reported by Mills (1989) shows that such a trajectory is possible. Suresh Verme, the person whose life Toran Singh remembered, was shot at close range. The bullet entered his skull in the right temporal region superior to and a little anterior to the right ear. It exited posterior to the right ear. A postmortem report gave the location of these wounds, to which Toran Singh's two birthmarks corresponded.

[12]Subjects who had small, round birthmarks apparently corresponding to bullet wounds of entry include: Chanai Choomalaiwong, Yahya Balcı, Henry Elkin, and Maung Tin Win. Their birthmarks were all between 0.5 and 1 millimeter in diameter. Those on Frank Dudley and Maung Mhat Tin were round, but larger (about 1.5 centimeters in diameter). That on Maung Than Htay was also round, but even larger (about 2 centimeters in diameter). The birthmark on Maung Aye Kyaw (corresponding to a wound of entry) was large, but instead of being round it was ovoid in shape; I suggested that the bullet that killed Maung Shwe may have entered his head obliquely. In Table 12-1 I list 18 subjects who had birthmarks corresponding to bullet wounds of entry and exit.

THE CASE OF JUGGI LAL AGARWAL

Introduction

My investigation of a case has often been spread out over several years, but I worked on the present case even longer than usual. The main investigation extended over a period of 8 years, and I obtained some additional information about it 12 years after my first interviews for it. There were two reasons for this prolongation of the study. First, when I began to study the case in 1971, I failed to attach as much importance to the subject's birthmark as I should have done; I only learned later, in 1978, that the father of the concerned previous personality had predicted the occurrence of the birthmark. Second, the previous personality had lived in a particularly inaccessible region of India, and although I have since been there many times, this area seemed to me at first formidably remote from the places in India with which I was then familiar.

I owe to Dr. Satwant Pasricha the revival of my lapsed interest in the case and also a great deal of difficult work in bringing the investigation to a stage at which I can report it.

Summary of the Case and Its Investigation

Juggi Lal Agarwal was born on August 13, 1955,[13] in Sirsaganj, District Mainpuri, Uttar Pradesh, India. His parents were Prem Bihari Lal and his wife, Prakash Wati. Juggi Lal was the fourth of their seven children. He was delivered normally at the end of a full-term uncomplicated pregnancy. Prem Bihari Lal belonged to the Bania caste of merchants of which the Agarwals are a prominent subgroup. He and one of his brothers, Shyam Bihari Lal, conducted a business in buying from farmers grain crops, which they then retailed to consumers. They also had other business enterprises, and they lived in a joint household with their families.

When Juggi Lal was born, his parents did not notice a birthmark; and the mark shown in Figure 10-12, which I believe to be a birthmark, was drawn to their attention by the father of the person about whose life Juggi Lal had been talking since he was between 1½ and 2 years old. The father of this man showed Juggi Lal's family the birthmark when Juggi Lal was about 7 years old.

Juggi Lal first began to speak around the age of 1. He was only about 1½ (according to his mother) when he began to talk about a previous life. His first words in that connection were "gaon, gaon, Bhongaon." After that he spoke the name of the wife he remembered (Chameli) and cried. As has happened often in other cases, Juggi Lal's parents at first could not understand to what he was referring. *Gaon* is the Hindi word for "village," and it figures as a suffix in many place-

[13]I believe this date accurate. As given to me it was based on the record of a horoscope, which, I was assured, had been prepared on the day of Juggi Lal's birth. The date of the death of Puttu Lal, the concerned previous personality of this case, is much less certain, as I shall explain below.

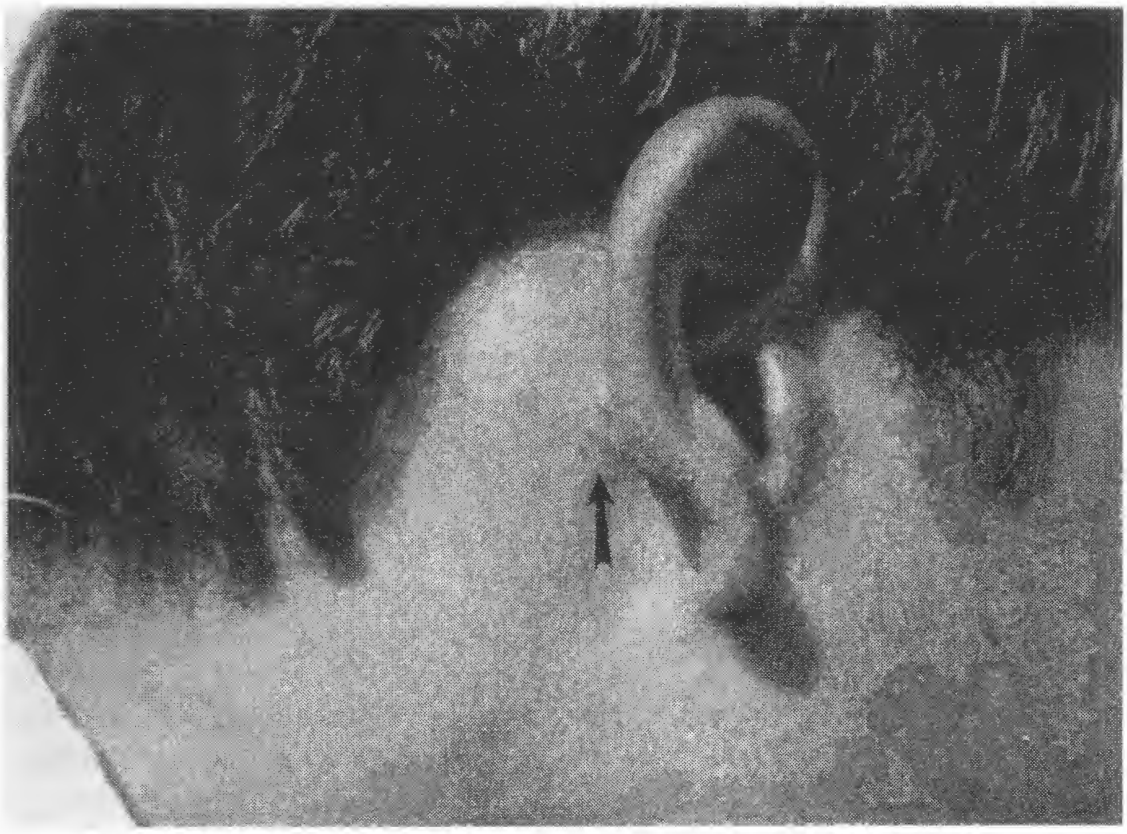

Figure 10-12 Birthmark behind the right ear of Juggi Lal Agarwal. The photograph was taken in October 1979 when Juggi Lal was 24 years old. The birthmark was a faint line of increased pigmentation indicated by the arrow. (Three small punctate elevations may be seen beneath the line and one above it; these may correspond to surgical stitch marks.) There was no corresponding line behind the left ear.

names of northern India. Bhongaon is a small town almost at the northern border of the Mainpuri District. However, that name alone, even when the name Chameli (of the wife) was added, did not remind Juggi Lal's parents of anyone they knew or had heard of.

Matters became somewhat clearer when Juggi Lal was about 4 and speaking more coherently. He then referred to a box that he said he owned with his name, Puttu Lal, written on the box. (Prem Bihari Lal said that Juggi Lal was only 2 when he first mentioned the box with Puttu Lal's name on it.) He also said at about this time, or a little earlier, that his (previous) village was Nisaura. (I probably misrecorded this name instead of writing *Misaura*, a village near Bhongaon.) Even then, however, Juggi Lal's parents felt no urge to verify his assertions about the life of Puttu Lal.

Eventually, when Juggi Lal was between 6 and 7 years old, a Brahmin of Sirsaganj, who had a daughter married in Misaura and who had heard about Juggi Lal's statements, talked about them in Misaura. This stimulated Puttu Lal's father, Girivar Singh, to come to Sirsaganj to meet Juggi Lal. I shall describe this meet-

ing later. Subsequently, other members of Puttu Lal's family came to meet Juggi Lal; but neither Juggi Lal nor any members of his family ever went to Misaura.

The case first came to my attention in 1965. A rather detailed report of it appeared in the Canadian magazine *Maclean's* on May 1, 1965. The author was Maurice deCunha, who had been Police Superintendent of the Mainpuri District at the time the case developed. He had personally inquired into the case and fully satisfied himself as to its authenticity. He had used pseudonyms in his case report. When I wrote to him (in 1968), he kindly furnished me with the real name and address of Juggi Lal's family (as well as information about two other cases hitherto unknown to me).

Despite having first obtained Juggi Lal's correct name and address in 1968, I did not reach the site of the case until more than 3 years later. In November 1971 I met Juggi Lal and recorded statements from him, both his parents, and one of his paternal uncles. Dr. Jamuna Prasad and Dr. L. P. Mehrotra assisted me. Juggi Lal's birthmark was shown to me, and I made some notes about it, but did not photograph it or then consider it particularly important. Afterward I neglected the case for several years. I had, however, obtained information about how to trace Puttu Lal's family (also from Maurice deCunha), and in 1975 I asked Dr. Pasricha if she would begin the study of that side of the case. She did this, and she also conducted some additional interviews with Juggi Lal and his parents in Sirsaganj.

In December 1978, Dr. Pasricha returned to Sirsaganj (with Dr. David Barker) and at that time tape-recorded a full interview with Juggi Lal's mother, Prakash Wati. It was during this interview that we first learned how Girivar Singh (Puttu Lal's father) had searched on Juggi Lal's head and found his birthmark.

By this time Dr. Pasricha and I had assembled considerable information about both sides of the case, but we were still without independent verification of some of Juggi Lal's statements. Moreover, we had a totally inadequate understanding of the cause of Puttu Lal's death. Accordingly, on two further visits to the Mainpuri District in 1979, we had further interviews with informants of both families concerned in the case; and we made extensive (and partly successful) searches through police registries and hospital records from which we emerged with a fairly satisfactory knowledge of the cause of Puttu Lal's death.

Finally, in February 1983, Dr. Pasricha and I interviewed Prem Wati, Puttu Lal's daughter; and Dr. Pasricha and Dr. Nicholas McClean-Rice interviewed another of Juggi Lal's paternal uncles, Kishen Bihari Lal, whom we had not interviewed earlier.

Maurice deCunha's account of the case published in *Maclean's* magazine was quite detailed. However, when I wrote to ask him whether he had strictly adhered to the facts so far as he could ascertain them, he replied that he had done so except for making his account "more dramatic from the reader's point of view." He also wrote that he himself had interviewed Juggi Lal, but had assigned a detective sub-inspector to record the testimony of the other informants. In the light of this information, I decided that although Maurice deCunha had been at the site of the case long before I was and although his report included details about which I

did not learn, I should base my report of the case exclusively on what Dr. Pasricha and I had learned by ourselves. (I shall, however, refer later to some information that Maurice deCunha furnished to me in correspondence.)

Persons Interviewed during the Investigation

In Sirsaganj we interviewed:

Juggi Lal
Prem Bihari Lal, Juggi Lal's father
Prakash Wati, Juggi Lal's mother
Shyam Bihari Lal, Juggi Lal's paternal uncle
Kishen Bihari Lal, Juggi Lal's paternal uncle

In Misaura, near Bhongaon, we interviewed:

Chameli Devi, Puttu Lal's wife
Nek Ram, Puttu Lal's younger son
Nathu Lal, Puttu Lal's cousin
Chiranji Lal, villager of a nearby hamlet, Nagla Duni
Ram Singh, village headman

In Boorha Bhartana, near Sirsaganj, we interviewed:

Prem Wati, Puttu Lal's daughter
Gulab Singh, Prem Wati's husband

A potentially important witness, Girivar Singh (Puttu Lal's father), who had been the first member of Puttu Lal's family to meet Juggi Lal, died in 1971, before we first went to Misaura.

Separately and together Dr. Pasricha and I interviewed all of the main informants at least twice and three of them three times.

Relevant Facts of Geography and Possibilities for Normal Means of Communication between the Two Families

Sirsaganj is a small city in the southern part of the Mainpuri District of Uttar Pradesh. Its population was about 25,000 in 1983.

Misaura is a small village, with probably fewer than 500 inhabitants, located almost at the other side of the district from Sirsaganj. It is a bare 2 kilometers from the small town of Bhongaon. Bhongaon is at the junction of a road running north from Mainpuri (the district town) and the old Grand Trunk Highway (between Calcutta and Delhi), which in that part of Uttar Pradesh follows an approximately east-west direction.

Sirsaganj and Misaura are 65 kilometers apart.

Prem Bihari Lal said that he had customers from Bhongaon, although he could not remember Puttu Lal as one of them. (It surprises me a little that he had

any customers from so far away, since for a farmer at Bhongaon grain dealers were much nearer at Mainpuri, which was less than half the distance from Bhongaon.) Prem Bihari Lal had therefore heard of Bhongaon, although he had never been there. He had never heard of Misaura before the case developed.[14]

Juggi Lal's mother, Prakash Wati, came from Bah, a town southwest of Sirsaganj, in the opposite direction from Bhongaon and Misaura.

Juggi Lal's family had also never previously met the Brahmin who first brought the two families together after the case developed. This man heard a rumor about Juggi Lal's case in Sirsaganj, came to meet him, and then carried news about his statements back to Misaura, where his daughter was living. By 1975 Prem Bihari Lal could not even remember the name of this man who had brought the first news of the case to Misaura.

Puttu Lal's family had some acquaintances in Sirsaganj, but none with Juggi Lal's family. Puttu Lal's wife, Chameli Devi, had never herself been to Sirsaganj. Puttu Lal's daughter, Prem Wati, was living in a village much closer to Sirsaganj than Misaura is. It is called Boorha Bhartana and is about 5 kilometers from Sirsaganj. I am confident that Prem Wati was not acquainted with Juggi Lal's family before the case developed. If she had been, the verifications of Juggi Lal's statements would have occurred through her and sooner than they did. As it was, she did not go to meet Juggi Lal until after her father had done so by himself.

In sum, this case is one in which the two families lived a long distance[15] apart and in which we can be more than ordinarily confident that they had no mutual friends. In saying this I am not overlooking the possibility that Puttu Lal may have had business dealings with Prem Bihari Lal's company of grain dealers. As I shall explain later, Juggi Lal said that as Puttu Lal he had traded with Prem Bihari Lal, although we have not verified that Puttu Lal did. However, assuming for this argument that Puttu Lal had brought his grain to Prem Bihari Lal's company, then it is quite possible that other farmers of the region of Bhongaon who had known Puttu Lal might also have brought their grain to Prem Bihari Lal. I shall return to this possible route for the normal communication of information later.

[14]I have taken this last statement from my interview with Prem Bihari Lal in 1971. However, in 1975 he told Dr. Pasricha that he *had* heard of Misaura before the case developed and remembered having customers from there; but he still did not remember that Puttu Lal had been one of them. He may have remembered something that he had earlier forgotten, an experience that I have observed in other informants.

[15]I consider (arbitrarily) any case in which the two families live more than 50 kilometers apart one with a "long distance" between them. I should, however, emphasize that the physical distance separating the two families is of relatively little importance, taken by itself, in assessing the ease of normal communications between the families concerned in a case. Two villages separated by 100 kilometers, but each lying within 100 meters of an asphalt road serviced by buses may be more accessible to each other than two other villages that are 10 kilometers apart yet joined by a road only traversable on foot or by bullock-carts.

The Life and Death of Puttu Lal

Puttu Lal was a farmer of the Lodha caste, who owned and cultivated land in and near the village of Misaura. He was the son of Girivar Singh. His mother (whose name I did not learn) died when he was still a child, and he was raised by his father's younger brother's wife. (She was, in Hindi, Puttu Lal's *chachi*.)

Puttu Lal married a girl named Chameli Devi, and they had four children, two sons and two daughters. One of the daughters died young, about 3 years before Puttu Lal died. One of the sons, Nek Ram, was only 15 days old when his father died.

Like many Indian villagers (and villagers elsewhere) Puttu Lal became involved in quarrels with his neighbors. His daughter Prem Wati said that the quarrel in which he became embroiled in the autumn of 1953 began when other villagers tried to harvest Puttu Lal's rice crop. (They would probably have alleged that he had sewn his crops on their land.) When quarrels about such matters occur among Indian villagers, the aggrieved persons often seek allies and look to their weapons. It thus happens that several or more villagers on two sides may engage in an armed scuffle. (A quarrel and village battle of just this type led to the death of Hardev Baksh Singh, whose life Nasruddin Shah remembered; see Chapter 6. Another example occurred in the case of Brijendra Singh; see Chapter 13.) In such contests the combatants may use spears (Figure 6-14) and kantas (Figure 6-15), but the commonest weapon is the heavy bamboo pole known as a lathi (Figures 4-24 and 12-35).

Puttu Lal's wife, Chameli Devi, said that during the scuffle he had received "a lathi blow on the top of the head,"[16] had never fully recovered from the injury he then received, and had died of its sequelae about 10 months later. This information led us to try to identify the date of the scuffle through study of the local police registers. On October 24, 1979, Dr. Pasricha and I made a thorough examination of the police registers at the Bhongaon Police Station, giving special attention to the years 1952-1954.

An engagement that I think was the one in question occurred early in the morning on November 1, 1953, at a place called Nagla Bambia, which is about 10 kilometers north of Bhongaon. The combatants were armed with lathis, spears, and kantas. (One side claimed the other side also had a gun.) Afterward both parties filed complaints at the Police Station at Bhongaon. Earlier, in March 1979, Nathu Lal (Puttu Lal's cousin) had told us at Misaura that a leader of the party opposed to that of Puttu Lal was one Brindavan, alias Bindu. Bindu's name appeared on both the pages of the police register recording this scuffle. He was

[16]Prem Bihari Lal said that Puttu Lal's father, Girivar Singh, had told him that Puttu Lal had been "struck by a lathi behind the ear very badly and had a wound [there]." This is secondhand testimony, but if correct it obviates a difficulty presented by Chameli Devi's memory, according to which Puttu Lal's original wound was at "the top of the head," but with the inflammatory process later localizing behind his right ear.

one of the accused in one complaint; and he himself was a plaintiff in the cross-complaint registered. For this second complaint a long list of the accused persons included "Puttain," a Lodha listed as residing in Birsingpur, which is about 6 kilometers from Misaura. Although the place of residence is wrong for Puttu Lal, such a slip can easily occur when a police clerk is recording the names, as he was in this instance, of more than 30 accused persons. "Puttain" may have been an alias for "Puttu," although Prem Wati, Puttu Lal's daughter, did not think it was one for her father. It may also have been just a mistake in recording "Puttu." Dr. Pasricha and I could find no other entry in the Police Register at Bhongaon which listed anyone like Puttu Lal in connection with a scuffle near Misaura.

A further reason for accepting the date of November 1, 1953, as that of the scuffle in which Puttu Lal was injured came from Chameli Devi's statement that Puttu Lal died about 10 months after the scuffle, and this accords fairly well with what we could learn from the fragmentary medical records we studied and from the estimates of informants who tried to recall (in the late 1970s) when Puttu Lal had died (in the early 1950s). I shall turn next to the medical records and the information from the informants' memories.

Chameli Devi said that Puttu Lal suffered from a swollen head in the area where he had been struck (presumably by a lathi), which was at the top of his head. According to her, the swelling subsided there, and the outside "was cured." But then "it started developing inside," and an area of inflammation developed around the right ear. It was soft and tender to touch, although she denied that this region was swollen.[17] In describing Puttu Lal's lesion behind his right ear, she used the Hindi word *phora*, which is best translated as furuncle or (sometimes) carbuncle. Puttu Lal's cousin, Nathu Lal, also used the word *phora* in his description of the lesion behind Puttu Lal's ear. (He said that he could not recall the side of the affected ear.)

Chameli Devi thought that her husband had been admitted to (or treated at) the Bhongaon Hospital. She further said that he had been taken to the Barhpur Hospital in Fatehgarh (the nearest city with medical facilities superior to those at Bhongaon) and had been operated on there. At the Barhpur Hospital he had had the lesion on the right ear cut "from the outside." This presumably referred to the lancing of an inflammatory area pointing at the site in question. Chameli Devi said that after the operation she saw two marks (presumably incision wounds) behind her husband's ear and that the area continued to ooze. Unfortunately, Barhpur Hospital was expensive, and Puttu Lal's family removed him from it against medical advice.

[17]I have taken this description from Chameli Devi's statements in March 1979. She had given a somewhat different account of the lesion to Dr. Pasricha in September 1975. At that time she had described a swelling of Puttu Lal's right cheek, which also extended to the throat. These accounts are not necessarily incompatible; the inflammatory process might have later spread from the area of the ear to the cheek and throat.

In 1979 Nathu Lal and Chiranji Lal agreed with Chameli Devi (in the account she then gave) that Puttu Lal had had a furuncle behind his ear. Unlike Chameli Devi, they could not remember which ear had been affected.

He then had some further outpatient treatment in Bhongaon, but died at his home in Misaura about 3 weeks after the operation in Fatehgarh.

Searching the records of the Government Hospital at Bhongaon, Dr. Pasricha and I eventually found two entries recording the treatment of a Puttu Lal in 1954. The first was on May 12th and the second on June 5th. Neither entry gave the village of the patient. In one his age was recorded as 52 and in another as 55, but such a discrepancy is hardly worth noticing since the clerk may have looked at Puttu Lal and written down a figure without even asking him his age. (Whether Puttu Lal knew his own age or not is a separate question.) As for the illness treated, the entry for May 12th included an almost illegible word that might be *otitis*, but we could not be sure. Whatever the lesion was, it was "cleaned and dressed." This at least suggested some external wound of the sort Puttu Lal seemed, from other evidence, to have had. For the entry of June 5th the lesion treated was described as an "ulcer," but its location was not given. The treatment provided was an ointment.

At the Barhpur Hospital in Fatehgarh, a disused garage had been called a record room, and old hospital records placed there, although it seemed to us more probable that they had been thrown in. Dr. Pasricha and I labored through the ill-sorted, dust-covered, and worm-eaten hospital records for the years of the 1950s. We eventually decided that the inpatient records for the 1950s had been destroyed or lost. But we found one possibly pertinent entry in the outpatient registers. This was for a Puttu Lal who came for treatment on September 18, 1954. His age was given as 40, but I have already said that an entry about a patient's age has little significance. Neither his village of residence nor his diagnosis were given, but he was apparently recorded as having been admitted to the hospital. This could have been the Puttu Lal with whom we are concerned.

The Probable Date of Puttu Lal's Death. Although we cannot be certain about the matter, let us suppose that the Puttu Lal who attended the outpatient department of Barhpur Hospital was the Puttu Lal of Misaura for whose death we are trying to find a reasonably accurate date. If we further suppose that his furuncle (or carbuncle) was lanced within a day or two of his admission to the hospital and that he was then (against medical advice) taken home by his family and died 3 weeks later, we reach a date for Puttu Lal's death of approximately October 9, 1954. How does this accord with the memories of the informants?

Three of the informants we interviewed in Misaura thought that they remembered when Puttu Lal had died. Two of these, Ram Singh and Nathu Lal, thought that he had died in August-September 1953; Chameli Devi thought he had died in August-September 1954. They thus all agreed about the season of the year, but not about the year. But if we have, as I believe we have, identified the date (November 1, 1953) of the scuffle in which Puttu Lal was injured, he could not possibly have died from effects of an injury then inflicted in August-September 1953. This suggests that Chameli Devi was right with regard to the year of her husband's death and that it was 1954. But she may have been off by a few weeks in her assignment of the month. The best conclusion I can reach is that Puttu Lal

died in late September or early October 1954. This would be about 10 months before Juggi Lal's birth.

I have dwelt at perhaps tedious length on our efforts to determine the date of Puttu Lal's death partly to show how unreliable the memories of informants about dates can sometimes be. This is understandable after 20 years, but should not be forgotten for that reason. When I first began studying the case in 1971, I learned with some surprise that informants thought Juggi Lal had been born on the very day that Puttu Lal had died, and only 1 hour after his death. I wondered at the time how this came to be thought, and hoped that I would one day understand more, if it were true.

However, I do not think it is. Juggi Lal was born early in the morning (3:00 a.m., his mother said), and Puttu Lal was said to have died in the early evening or during the night. Juggi Lal was born in the part of August which is in the Hindu month of Bhadon, which also includes part of September. If Puttu Lal's death was communicated as having also occurred in Bhadon (the word for the Hindu month used by Chameli Devi), it would have been easy for members of Juggi Lal's family to assume an almost instantaneous rebirth.[18] Juggi Lal facilitated this conclusion by his statements about how he came to be reborn in the Agarwal family of Sirsaganj. (I shall describe these statements in a later section.)

Comment on the Cause of Puttu Lal's Death. In the absence of detailed medical records—I might almost say any medical records whatever—we must fall back on the statements of informants, particularly those of Puttu Lal's wife, Chameli Devi, for an understanding of his illness and death. It seems clear that he never fully recovered from the wound he received during the scuffle of November 1, 1953. Some chronic infection of the tissues of the scalp developed, and there may have been some osteomyelitis. Eventually the main inflammatory process localized around the right ear, where a furuncle or carbuncle developed. (The inflammation may also have spread more widely in the head.) A doctor at the Barhpur Hospital in Fatehgarh then decided to lance the lesion. He surely intended to administer antibiotics to the patient, but was thwarted when his family removed him prematurely from the hospital. The venous drainage of the scalp is such that infections there can easily spread into the brain and into the systemic blood stream. The act of lancing may have stimulated such a spread. I conjecture that Puttu Lal died of a severe bacteremia which the lancing of his furuncle (or carbuncle) may have initiated and which the doctor, through the removal of his patient from his care, was powerless to control.

Statements and Recognitions Made by Juggi Lal

In Table 10-2 I have listed the statements Juggi Lal made before the two families met. I think it probable that Juggi Lal made more statements than our

[18]Some villagers of northern India believe that rebirth occurs immediately after death. They do not seem to hold this belief dogmatically as do the Druses of Lebanon (Stevenson, 1980), but those who do believe it may be inclined to harmonize their memories of dates to accord with the belief.

informants later remembered and told us about. Juggi Lal himself referred during our interviews with him to a number of details that he obviously considered part of his original memories. I shall mention these below.

Missing from the list of statements is a reference to the cause of Puttu Lal's death. It is unusual (but far from unknown) for the subjects of these cases to say nothing about how the person whose life they remember died. If Juggi Lal had (when he was young) mentioned to his family how Puttu Lal had died, his statements on this matter did not figure among those they later told us spontaneously. It could have slipped their minds, and I can tell from our notes that we failed to ask a direct question about it. The omission is somewhat curious, because Juggi Lal himself in 1971 gave us full details about Puttu Lal's death. However, this was long after Puttu Lal's father, Girivar Singh, had come to meet Juggi Lal and, in showing the family his birthmark, had told them all about how Puttu Lal had been struck on the head by a lathi and later died of the aftereffects of the wound he received.

Juggi Lal was credited with having recognized members of Puttu Lal's family, and I have included in Table 10-2 three recognitions (items 18-20) for which I obtained testimony from adults of Juggi Lal's family. Of the persons recognized we obtained an account of the recognition only from Prem Wati.

Juggi Lal's Statements about Why and How He Came to His Parents' Family. Juggi Lal said that as Puttu Lal he had sold grain to Prem Bihari Lal. He said that he appreciated the unusual courtesy that Prem Bihari Lal and others of the family company had shown him when he had come to Sirsaganj to sell his grain. He recalled noting that there was no door in front of the stairs that led from the shop on the ground floor to the family's living quarters above. He appears to have considered the absence of any barring door a sign of the family's openness and hospitality. According to Prem Bihari Lal, Juggi Lal had said when younger: "I [as Puttu Lal] used to look at this [open staircase] from your shop, and I said to myself 'I will be reborn here.'" In 1971 Juggi Lal seemed to remember this wish as from the life of Puttu Lal, and he told us that Puttu Lal had kept the wish to himself and never expressed it to anyone else.

According to Juggi Lal, Puttu Lal had come for the last time to the shop of Prem Bihari Lal a month or two before his death. This is unverified; indeed we have not even verified that Puttu Lal *ever* came to Prem Bihari Lal's shop. However, as Puttu Lal seems to have been ambulatory during much of the time when the infection behind his ear was smoldering, it is at least possible that he had come to Sirsaganj a month or two before his death.

When Juggi Lal's parents asked him how, after death, he came from Misaura to Sirsaganj, he replied: "I came on foot."

Juggi Lal's Statements in the 1970s. When I first met Juggi Lal in 1971, he said that he had forgotten some of the memories of the previous life that he had formerly had and still remembered others. What he then said to me (and later said to Dr. Pasricha or to both of us) has no value as evidence of what he earlier knew paranormally about Puttu Lal's life, because he had had frequent visits from members of Puttu Lal's family during the early 1960s. However, I think it worth

Table 10-2. **Summary of Statements and Recognitions Made by Juggi Lal**

Item	*Informants*	*Verification*	*Comments*
1. His name was Puttu Lal.	Prem Bihari Lal, Juggi Lal's father	Chameli Devi, wife of Puttu Lal	
2. He was from Nisaura.	Prem Bihari Lal	Chameli Devi	The correct name of the village is Misaura, not Nisaura. This mistake is almost certainly due to a slip on my part or that of my interpreter in 1971, because the name Misaura occurs correctly in all notes made after my first study of the case in 1971.
3. Bhongaon [mentioned]	Prakash Wati, Juggi Lal's mother	Verified by me during a visit to Misaura in1979.	Juggi Lal may have said he was from Bhongaon, but I have no note that he did more than mention the name of the town. Bhongaon is the town nearest to Misaura.
4. He was a Lodha.	Prakash Wati	Nek Ram, Puttu Lal's son	The members of the Lodha caste are cultivators.
5. His wife was called Chameli.	Prem Bihari Lal	Chameli Devi	Prem Bihari Lal mentioned for this item only the first of Chameli Devi's two names.
6. He had two sons.	Prem Bihari Lal	Members of Puttu Lal's family I met Puttu Lal's son Nek Ram.	Several members of the family participated in furnishing information about the genealogy of Puttu Lal's family. Puttu Lal's sons were Jograj and Nek Ram. Nek Ram was born 2 weeks before Puttu Lal's death.

7. He had a daughter.	Prem Bihari Lal	Prem Wati, Puttu Lal's daughter	Puttu Lal's only living daughter when he died was Prem Wati. He had had another daughter, Lalli, but she had died about 3 years before he did.
8. His mother died when he was 6 months old.	Prem Bihari Lal	Unverified; see comment.	Puttu Lal's mother died when he was "very young," but I did not learn how old he was at the time of her death.
9. His chachi [wife of father's younger brother] had brought him up.	Prem Bihari Lal	Nathu Lal, Puttu Lal's cousin	The aunt who raised Puttu Lal was Nathu Lal's mother.
10. He had fields.	Prem Bihari Lal	Prem Wati Gulab Singh, Prem Wati's husband	Puttu Lal was a landowning farmer.
11. He had mango trees.	Prem Bihari Lal Prakash Wati	Prem Wati	According to Prakash Wati, Juggi Lal had spoken of having trees without saying what kind they were.
12. He had a box with his name written on it.	Prem Bihari Lal Shyam Bihari Lal, Juggi Lal's paternal uncle	Chameli Devi	
13. His name was tattooed on his daughter's arm.	Prakash Wati Kishen Bihari Lal, Juggi Lal's paternal uncle	Prem Wati Chameli Devi Dr. Pasricha and I examined this tattoo ourselves.	Prem Wati had several names tattooed on her arm, including her own and "Puttu Ram" (not "Puttu Lal"). This latter name was tattooed before Puttu Lal's death. Kishen Bihari Lal said that when Prem Wati first came to

Table 10-2 *(continued)*

Item	*Informants*	*Verification*	*Comments*
			Sirsaganj, members of Juggi Lal's family affected not to know who Prem Wati was in order to test Juggi Lal. Juggi Lal, seeing Prem Wati, said: "Remove her sleeve from her arm. My name *Puttu Lal* is tattooed there." Prem Wati herself did not mention this remark to us. See item 19 for her account of Juggi Lal's recognition of her. The two accounts are not incompatible.
14. He used to come to Sirsaganj.	Shyam Bihari Lal	Nathu Lal Gulab Singh	Nathu Lal and Gulab Singh both recalled that Puttu Lal traded jaggery (palm tree sugar) in Sirsaganj. I did not ask Nathu Lal whether Puttu Lal also sold his grain there. I did ask Gulab Singh this question, but he could not remember whether his father-in-law had traded his grain in Sirsaganj. (Elsewhere, I stated erroneously that Puttu Lal's family knew he had taken *grain* to Sirsaganj [Stevenson, 1987, p. 243]; in fact, they remembered only that he had taken jaggery there.)
15. He sold his grain at his present father's shop.	Prem Bihari Lal	Unverified	Prem Bihari Lal recalled that he had farmers from Misaura who sold to him, but he could not remember that Puttu Lal had been one of them.

16. His father was more courteous than other grain dealers were.	Prem Bihari Lal	See comment.	This item is difficult to evaluate. Prem Bihari Lal said he treated all his customers equally and with courtesy.
17. There was no door to the staircase when he was coming to his present father's shop.	Prem Bihari Lal	Prem Bihari Lal	The door was added before Juggi Lal's birth. According to Juggi Lal, this open staircase figured among the reasons for Puttu Lal's wish to be reborn in Prem Bihari Lal's family. See text for further details and discussion of this item.
18. Recognition of Girivar Singh, Puttu Lal's father	Prakash Wati Prem Bihari Lal		This recognition occurred when Juggi Lal was about 7 years old. When Girivar Singh arrived at Prem Bihari Lal's house, Juggi Lal was at school. Girivar sat down and waited for him. When Juggi Lal returned, he was asked who this man was, and he replied: "He is my father." Girivar then said: "What is my name?" and Juggi Lal replied: "Giriar." (I cannot say whether the variant spelling of the name *Girivar* in this item arose from slight mispronunciation by Juggi Lal or in faulty transcription of the tape recording that Dr. Pasricha made of Prakash Wati's testimony in 1978.) The accounts of this recognition by Prem Bihari Lal (in 1975) and Prakash Wati (in 1978) accorded well, but Prakash Wati's included more details. Girivar was moved to tears by his meeting with Juggi Lal.

Table 10-2 *(continued)*

Item	*Informants*	*Verification*	*Comments*
19. Recognition of Prem Wati, Puttu Lal's daughter	Prem Wati Prakash Wati		According to Prem Wati, when she went to meet Juggi Lal for the first time, she was sitting silently in a room, and someone asked Juggi Lal: "Who is she?" He replied: "She is my daughter." Prakash Wati said that when Juggi Lal saw Prem Wati, he said: "Prepare some food. My daughter has come."
20. Recognition of Prem Wati's mother-in-law	Prakash Wati		The woman recognized was picked out of a group of women, but I did not learn further details from Prakash Wati of how Juggi Lal recognized her. Juggi Lal himself remembered (in 1975) this recognition and said that he had been asked to point out Puttu Lal's daughter's mother-in-law. In that case the usual glances of others present could have cued his response, because the woman recognized presumably came with her son and daughter-in-law (Prem Wati). The recognition took place after Girivar Singh's first visit to Juggi Lal. We neglected to ask Prem Wati for her account of this recognition.

recording the details of Puttu Lal's life that seemed prominent among the memories Juggi Lal said he still had in the 1970s.

I mentioned earlier that Juggi Lal's parents did not tell us that Juggi Lal had referred to the cause of Puttu Lal's death when he was younger. But Puttu Lal's death figured prominently among Juggi Lal's statements of the 1970s. In 1971 he said that he recalled being hit on the head by a lathi during a fight, that the wound became infected, that he was operated upon, and that he died 2 or 3 days after the operation. He then left and came "on foot" (immediately) to his parents' home in Sirsaganj.[19]

Juggi Lal remembered recognizing various members of Puttu Lal's family who had come to see him. Among these he mentioned two other recognitions for which, however, we obtained no adult's corroboration. Juggi Lal said that he had recognized Puttu Lal's son-in-law (Prem Wati's husband, Gulab Singh), who had been particularly easy to recognize because he had only one eye.

Juggi Lal's Behavior Related to the Previous Life

Circumstances and Manner of Juggi Lal's Speaking about the Previous Life. I mentioned earlier that, according to Prakash Wati, Juggi Lal's first attempts to speak about the previous life consisted of his saying "gaon, gaon" and "Bhongaon."

Prem Bihari Lal told me in 1971 that Juggi Lal (when he was a young child) had not talked every day about the previous life, as have some other subjects about the lives they claim to remember. Juggi Lal had talked about the previous life "whenever he liked" and at no particular time of day.

With regard to a particular time of day for thinking about the previous life (as opposed to speaking about it), Juggi Lal told me (also in 1971) that he did not think about it when he was at work, but did occasionally (at that time) think about it at night.

Juggi Lal's Attitudes toward Puttu Lal's Family. I deliberately use the plural word *attitudes* because Juggi Lal's feelings toward Puttu Lal's family underwent a definite change, about the reasons for which we have the materials for conjecture, but no certain knowledge.

Both Prem Bihari Lal and his older brother, Shyam Bihari Lal, said that Juggi Lal (when he first began to speak about the previous life) expressed a wish to go to the previous family. Prem Bihari Lal recalled Juggi Lal's telling his grandmother: "Granny, I am missing my wife very much. Let us go there." She said they would go, but in the end no one took him, and he never went to Misaura.

Prem Bihari Lal thought that Juggi Lal had merely expressed a wish to go to Misaura, but had never tried to do so. Shyam Bihari Lal, however, said that Juggi Lal had walked out of the house a few times as if he was on his way to Misaura, but

[19]Juggi Lal's statement that Puttu Lal came to Sirsaganj immediately after his death probably contributed to the false belief I mentioned earlier according to which Juggi Lal was born an hour after Puttu Lal's death. Juggi Lal, however, did not say that he was reborn immediately after Puttu Lal's death, only that as Puttu Lal he came immediately after death to Sirsaganj.

had never walked "very far." Presumably someone ran after him and brought him back; or he might have come back by himself. Kishen Bihari Lal, another of Juggi Lal's uncles, agreed that when Juggi Lal was young, he had run away from home in the direction of Mainpuri, which would be on the way to Misaura from Sirsaganj.

However, by the time of Girivar Singh's first meeting with Juggi Lal he had changed his mind about rejoining the previous family. At that first meeting Girivar, moved to tears by seeing Juggi Lal (and apparently fully convinced by the birthmark he had found behind Juggi Lal's ear that he was his son Puttu Lal reborn), wanted to take Juggi Lal back to Misaura; but Juggi Lal refused to go with him.

Juggi Lal later remembered this occasion and talked with Dr. Pasricha about it in 1975. He remembered Girivar Singh's asking him to go with him to Misaura and remembered refusing. Then Girivar said to him: "Don't you remember anybody [at Misaura]?" Juggi Lal recalled replying: "No." Then he added (to Dr. Pasricha) that he *had* remembered and still had at that time a desire to go to Misaura; but he did not show this desire.

At about this time or later, Juggi Lal attributed his reluctance to visit Puttu Lal's family to the difference in caste between the two families. He said: "We are Agarwals, and they are Lodhas. I will not go [there]." And he never had gone. Prakash Wati believed that he took satisfaction in the idea of his "caste promotion" from Lodha to Agarwal. She quoted him as having said: "I was Lodha, and now I have been born in an Agarwal family." She also said that Juggi Lal had pointed out the caste difference to Girivar Singh saying: "I am fine here. You are Lodha and I am Agarwal."[20]

Yet some of the old attraction for Misaura remained. Prakash Wati told Dr. Pasricha in 1975 that even then Juggi Lal from time to time spoke about going to Misaura, especially if he knew there would be a fair in the region that he might attend.

This account of Juggi Lal's expressed desire to go to Misaura would remain incomplete without mention of his having twice denied, once in 1971 and again in 1979, that he had *ever* wished to go to Misaura. In 1979 he may have forgotten the earlier expressed desire, but his denial of it in 1971 puzzles me, because in 1975 he told Dr. Pasricha that he could remember asking his grandmother to take him to Bhongaon. (As mentioned, Misaura is at most 2 kilometers from Bhongaon, and so someone residing there might not inaccurately think of himself as "from Bhongaon.")

The Attitudes toward Juggi Lal's Memories of the Adults Concerned in the Case

Juggi Lal's parents seem to have been neutral with regard to his memories of a previous life. They do not appear to have encouraged him to talk about the

[20]Juggi Lal's attitude toward caste was the opposite of that of those subjects—Jagdish Chandra, Veer Singh, Gopal Gupta, Brijendra Singh, and Jasbir Singh are examples—who showed what I call "Brahmin snobbery." Born in lower-caste families and remembering the previous lives of Brahmins, they adopted stances of superiority toward their current families. Juggi Lal showed this attitude toward the previous family.

memories; but neither did they discourage him or adopt the measures of suppression that many parents of northern India apply to children who remember previous lives. They had heard of the widespread belief (in northern India) that such children die young, but they did not accept it as true.

In a letter of July 1977 Maurice deCunha told me that Juggi Lal's family became apprehensive that Puttu Lal's family might somehow try to capitalize on the belief that the low-caste Puttu Lal had been reborn among the higher-caste (and certainly far more prosperous) Agarwals. I did not myself learn of any such concerns, but they might have existed earlier and have abated by the time I reached the case. According to Maurice deCunha, there were sufficient grounds for him (as District Superintendent of Police) to think that ill-feeling between the communities might lead to violence. This danger led him to enquire into the case and ultimately to investigate it in order to understand better the possible origins of communal friction deriving from it.

Girivar Singh was eager for Juggi Lal to visit Misaura and tried earnestly to persuade Juggi Lal to come with him to Misaura.

Puttu Lal's daughter Prem Wati and her husband, Gulab Singh (who lived much closer to Sirsaganj), came frequently to see Juggi Lal. They came so frequently that their visits became tiresome, and Juggi Lal's parents sent him to another nearby town (Shikohabad) to stay with relatives or friends. They brought him back after Prem Wati and her husband discontinued trying to see him. Later some social visits resumed; in 1979 we learned that Gulab Singh came to see Juggi Lal at least occasionally, and in February 1983 Prem Wati told us that Juggi Lal had visited her in Boorha Bhartana a month before we did.

Puttu Lal's widow, Chameli Devi, never visited Juggi Lal. Unlike her father-in-law and her daughter, she felt no relationship toward Juggi Lal and saw no point in meeting him.

Juggi Lal's Birthmark

I have already emphasized that the mark behind Juggi Lal's right ear (Figure 10-12) was not observed by his parents when he was born or at any time afterward until the first visit of Puttu Lal's father, when Juggi Lal was about 7 years old. Girivar Singh had come to Sirsaganj upon hearing something about Juggi Lal's statements; but he became convinced that Juggi Lal was his son reborn only when he found the birthmark behind the ear at the (probable) site where Puttu Lal had been struck by a lathi.

I first observed the birthmark myself in 1971, but did not obtain satisfactory photographs of it until 1979. At that time the mark consisted mainly of a line of increased pigmentation extending about 1 centimeter posteriorly from the inner margin of the pinna. The mark was not prominent, and I have indicated it with an arrow in Figure 10-12. It was about 1.5 centimeters long and 1 millimeter wide. There was a row of tiny punctate elevations just inferior to the line of increased pigmentation. One small elevation was above the line of increased pigmentation.

(These tiny elevations may correspond to surgical stitch marks.)[21] There was no similar line of increased pigmentation behind Juggi Lal's left ear.

In 1971 Juggi Lal said that he had not had any symptoms of ear disease, and this appears to have been true until the mid-1970s. Then, however, he began to have furuncles on the back of his right ear from time to time. In 1979 Juggi Lal said that he had had this tendency for the previous 4 or 5 years. (His mother remembered it as having started about 3 years earlier.) The area affected was not that of the birthmark, but external to it on the medial surface of the pinna. At that site I could see what appeared to be some residues of furuncles.

Comment

Of this case it can be said with more than usual confidence that the two families concerned had had no prior acquaintance before the development of the case except for the unverified, although possible, business relationship between Puttu Lal and Prem Bihari Lal's firm of grain dealers. This acquaintance, however, had no social aspect, and Prem Bihari Lal had not fixed in his mind either the name of Puttu Lal or that of the village from which he came, Misaura. I am certain that he had never heard of Puttu Lal's death before the case developed, and this means that Prakash Wati had not heard of it either. We can therefore exclude the hypothesis of maternal impression on the fetus as a possible explanation for Juggi Lal's birthmark.

We can also exclude the birthmark as a stimulus for Juggi Lal's talking about the previous life, since he did not draw attention to it and his parents had never noticed it until the occasion of Girivar Singh's first visit to Juggi Lal when he was about 7 years old.

I mentioned earlier the possibility that other farmers of Misaura (or other villages around Bhongaon) might have come to Sirsaganj to sell their grain. If Puttu Lal did this, as seems likely, other peasant farmers of the region probably did so also. Some of them might then have discussed Puttu Lal's death in Prem Bihari Lal's shop and perhaps in front of a tiny Juggi Lal playing on the floor of his father's shop. This conjecture requires us in the first instance to suppose marked departures in Prem Bihari Lal's family from the usual customs of child rearing in India. For the young Juggi Lal, at least until the age when he began to speak about the previous life, would ordinarily have been kept constantly with his mother and under her surveillance. He would almost certainly not have been playing on the floor in his father's shop. But if this had nevertheless happened, then the hypothesis has to suppose also that all the information later attributed by his parents to Juggi Lal had to flow past Prem Bihari Lal (or, if he was out of the shop, past his brother Shyam Bihari Lal) without this information being later remembered. This could have happened. We may even conceive that both Prem Bihari Lal and Shyam Bihari Lal were absent from the shop while a farmer from

[21]I also observed birthmarks seemingly corresponding to stitch marks in one of the birthmarks of Corliss Chotkin, Jr., as described in Chapter 12.

Bhongaon narrated to a shop employee the story of Puttu Lal's scuffle, injury, and death before the passively receptive Juggi Lal. I concede the possibility of such a scene, but not its likelihood.

Juggi Lal's Later Development

Prem Bihari Lal said that Juggi Lal had stopped speaking spontaneously about the previous life when he was between 7 and 8 years old. However, as I mentioned earlier, Juggi Lal said that he had preserved some memories of the previous life up to 1971 and still occasionally thought about it. His mother also remarked that in 1975 he still sometimes referred to it and even talked of going to Misaura, although he never did go.

In October 1979, when I last met Juggi Lal, he was 24 years old. He said then that he had not forgotten the memories of the previous life. (I think that he was referring to the memories he had preserved up to 1971, when he had said he had forgotten some details.)

Juggi Lal attended school up to the eighth grade, which he completed. He then discontinued school and began working with his father in their grain business and other enterprises. Comparing his present life with that of Puttu Lal, he said that he preferred being in a higher caste and among business people rather than farmers.

He considered his general health poor. When we asked about the details of this, he mentioned "stomach trouble" and a poor appetite. I have already mentioned Juggi Lal's tendency to have furuncles behind the right ear, but this might have resulted from, or been facilitated by, poor nutrition.

He had not yet married, but neither had his older brother, who would be expected to marry first. The family business had suffered some reverses, and Juggi Lal's parents may have been unprepared for the expenses involved in marrying their sons.

In February 1983, Gulab Singh told us that Juggi Lal was still coming from time to time to visit him and his wife (Prem Wati) at Boorha Bhartana. He had last been there only a month earlier.

THE CASE OF NAVALKISHORE YADAV

Introduction

In the cases that I have mentioned or described so far in this section, informants' statements (or other information) about the location of wounds on a deceased person led other persons—myself in three cases—to observe a birthmark of which these persons had not previously been aware. In the present case I worked in the opposite direction. An informant's statement about a birthmark led me to infer a correct detail about the mode of the deceased person's death before I had learned this detail.

Apart from this feature, the case is slight and contains little detail of any kind. However, it derives some additional value from observations made during its study of the fading of the subject's birthmark as he became older. (I devote Chapter 11 solely to the evidence of fading and movement in some birthmarks.)

Summary of the Case and Its Investigation

Navalkishore Yadav was born in the hamlet of Bahuri in Mainpuri District, Uttar Pradesh, India, on October 9, 1978. His parents were Siri Prakash Yadav and his wife, Kusum. He was the second of their two sons. Siri Prakash Yadav was a schoolteacher.

One or 2 months before Navalkishore's birth Siri Prakash's second cousin, Krishna, had committed suicide by hanging himself with a rope. Krishna and his recently married wife had been living in Bahuri in an extended household that included Siri Prakash and his family. On the basis mainly of a prediction and a dream, Siri Prakash Yadav thought that Navalkishore might be Krishna reborn.

In March 1979, Dr. Satwant Pasricha and I stopped to make some inquiries at a schoolhouse (near Bahuri) just off the Grand Trunk Road that joins Delhi and Kanpur (as well as many other cities) in Uttar Pradesh. Siri Prakash Yadav was the headmaster of the school, and he obligingly answered our questions. Then, having learned about our investigations, he asked us whether we would be interested in a case that had recently occurred in his own family. When we said that we were interested, he explained why he believed that his son might be his cousin reborn. (At this stage he mentioned that his cousin had hanged himself.) Then he went on to say that Navalkishore had a birthmark at the back of his neck (Figure 10-13). At this point he had not told us details of how Krishna had hanged himself, and when Dr. Pasricha mentioned (in translating) the location of the birthmark to me, I remarked (to her) that if the baby had a birthmark there, the knot of the rope with which Krishna had hanged himself must have been at the back of his neck. Dr. Pasricha did not translate my remark to Siri Prakash Yadav but asked him to describe the details of Krishna's suicide. We then learned that the knot of the rope had been at the back of Krishna's neck. We also learned about a few additional details of the case during this interview. We then went to Bahuri, where we photographed the birthmark on the back of Navalkishore's neck (Figure 10-13).

On October 23, 1979, about 6 months after our first interview, we returned to Bahuri. We talked again with Siri Prakash Yadav and also interviewed his wife, Kusum, and his older brother, Om Prakash. Krishna's mother (whose name I did not record) intervened at one point with some helpful information concerning marks on her son's neck. At that time we took more photographs of Navalkishore's birthmark, which had faded within the 6 months since we had last seen him so that it was just barely visible.

A year later, on November 14, 1980, we again met Siri Prakash Yadav. He told us that Navalkishore had started speaking, but had until then said nothing about a previous life. He was then just over 2 years old.

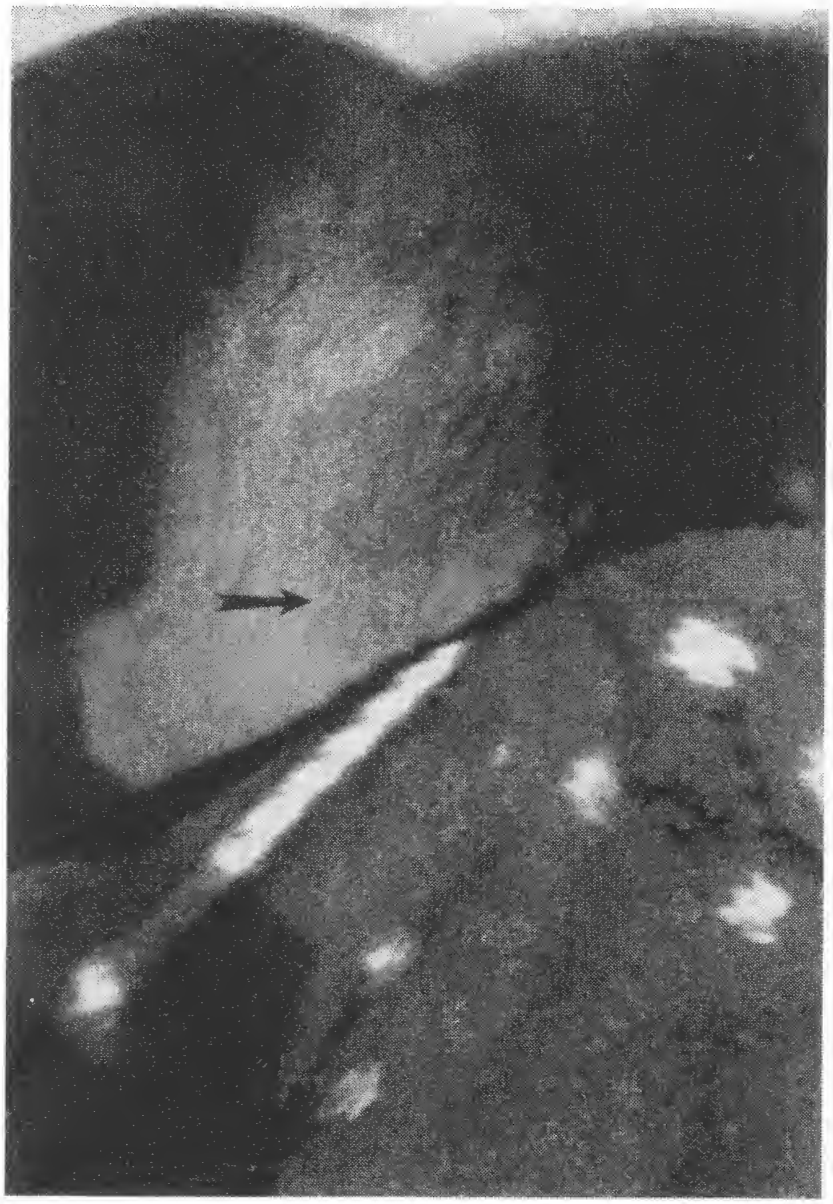

Figure 10-13 Birthmark at the posterior surface of Navalkishore's neck as it appeared in March 1979, when he was about 6 months old. The birthmark was a roughly circular area of erythema measuring approximately 5 centimeters by 6 centimeters.

The Life and Death of Krishna Yadav

Krishna Yadav was born in approximately 1960. He grew up and lived in a typical extended family of northern India with a joint household that included several brothers, cousins, and their families.

When Krishna was a young child, he suffered from malnutrition. He became underweight, and his belly protruded in a way that suggested kwashiorkor, a disease of protein deficiency. For this condition the people of his village applied a remedy of their traditional medicine, which consisted in the application of a wire

heated to redness and then touched to the back of the neck about 10 centimeters below the occipital protuberance; this would be at the inferior margins of the neck near the upper back. This treatment resulted in two linear horizontal scars which persisted on Krishna's lower neck until the time of his death. These figure among the marks on his neck that might have corresponded with Navalkishore's birthmark. However, these scar marks were considerably inferior in location to the site of Navalkishore's birthmark.

I learned little about Krishna's character apart from his being fond of drums and the depression that followed his marriage and preceded his suicide.

When Krishna was 17, his family arranged a marriage for him with a girl called Sakuntala from another village. He did not like her, and he showed his feelings by sulkily refusing to eat the food she prepared for him. About 6 months after Krishna's marriage, the joint household was divided so that the several families no longer prepared their meals in the same kitchen. This might have made matters worse for Krishna instead of better.

He became moody and also more religious than he had previously been. After his suicide his family remembered that he had loosened the cord of a *charpoy* (Indian village cot) and had spent time looking at the ceiling. It was thought that he had been ruminating how he might hang himself, but he never attempted suicide or talked about it before he hanged himself. However, perhaps another hint of his intention could be detected in his saying to Siri Prakash Yadav: "Next time I shall be born in your family." Krishna had been much attached to Siri Prakash Yadav's wife, Kusum.

As mentioned, the family did not interpret any of Krishna's remarks or actions as indicating a suicidal intention, and they failed to appreciate how depressed he must have been. They were completely unprepared for him to hang himself. He did this in one of the rooms of the house. As soon as he was noticed, family members tried to bring him down by loosening the rope from around his neck. Its knot was at the back of the neck. The members of the family who first discovered Krishna hanging had no cutting instrument handy, and because the rope around his neck was a little loose, they tried pulling it forward and up over his chin. But this maneuver simply tightened the knot further without freeing Krishna from the loop of rope, which was not loose enough to pass over his chin. Eventually, a gardening instrument (a sort of moderately sharp-edged trowel) was brought, but the room was dark, and it could not be used effectively. The person holding it tried to cut the knot at the back of Krishna's head. In doing so he made one or more cuts in the skin at the back of the neck next to the knot in the rope, although these were not noticed until the next morning.

Finally, Krishna was cut down. He was unconscious and may already have been dead, but the family members tried to apply what they knew of artificial respiration in the hope of reviving him. This consisted of laying him down supine and then moving his limbs, pressing on his abdomen, and shaking his chest slightly. All this had no effect, and after a time they abandoned their efforts at resuscitation. Krishna's body was cremated the following day.

When Krishna's body was taken out to the cremation grounds, Siri Prakash Yadav noticed a mark at the back of the neck and some blood surrounding it. (He also noticed some faint marks on both sides of the neck that he attributed to the pressure of the rope there.) The mark at the back of the neck had presumably been made by the knot in the rope and by the rather clumsy efforts to cut the knot. The blood was not washed off the body before cremation.

Suicide being regarded as shameful in India, the family wished to avoid publicity for Krishna's mode of death, and despite the suddenness of his death there was no police inquiry.

I have reached no certainty concerning the exact date of Krishna's death. Siri Prakash Yadav thought that it had occurred on August 31, 1978, but suggested that the date might have been July 31st. His brother, Om Prakash, said the death occurred in August 1978, but could not remember an exact date. Dr. Pasricha and I have not searched for any written record of the date of death, but it seems safe to say that it occurred in the late summer of 1978 and not more than 3 months before Navalkishore's birth.

After Krishna's death his family arranged for his widow, Sakuntala, to be married to another member of their extended clan. Her second husband was a cousin of both Krishna and Siri Prakash Yadav. This marriage meant that Sakuntala was still a member of the same family at Bahuri when Navalkishore was born and at the time of our investigation of his case. (But we did not think it appropriate to try to interview her.)

Announcing Dreams

Navalkishore's mother, Kusum, dreamed about Krishna on the morning of the day when she gave birth to Navalkishore, in the evening. In her dream Krishna appeared, and she held him saying: "I won't let you go now." Krishna then bit her on the shoulder in order to free himself, and the dream ended.

About 2½ months after Krishna's death, and shortly after Navalkishore's birth, Siri Prakash Yadav dreamed about Krishna. Siri Prakash Yadav was sleeping one night when he heard a voice say: "I have come." He then (still in the dream) saw Krishna sitting quietly at the foot of the cot on which Siri Prakash Yadav was sleeping. Krishna asked: "Why did you press me the other day?" In two different accounts of this dream Siri Prakash Yadav used different words for the actions to which Krishna referred. (In the other account he used the word *shake* instead of *press*.) Siri Prakash believed that Krishna (appearing in the dream) meant to refer to the family's efforts at resuscitating him after he had hanged himself. Family members had pressed on Krishna's abdomen in their efforts to revive him; and they had also shaken him.[22]

[22]This is another instance in which a deceased person has seemed to appear in a dream after the birth of the subject who will later claim to be that person reborn or (in the present case) be identified as that person reborn. I list other examples in the report of Mahmut Ekici's case. I have learned of a few such dreams among the Tlingit of Alaska and described one of these elsewhere (Stevenson, 1980, pp. 255-256).

Some Observations of Navalkishore's Behavior

As mentioned earlier, Krishna was fond of drums. Siri Prakash Yadav said that Navalkishore liked to "play" on drums. Since he made this remark about Navalkishore when the latter was less than 6 months old, the word *play* does not seem appropriate. Perhaps, however, Navalkishore had managed to crawl across a room to drums and thump on them with pleasure. I am sorry that we did not learn more details of what he did that seemed to justify his father's remark about "playing on drums."

Somewhat similar doubts occur with regard to Siri Prakash Yadav's statement that Navalkishore would not let Krishna's widow, Sakuntala, hold him, although he went willingly to other persons outside his immediate family. (As I mentioned, Sakuntala had been remarried in the family and was still living in the same compound as when she had been married to Krishna.) When we discussed this behavior with Siri Prakash Yadav's older brother, Om Prakash, the latter denied that Navalkishore had shown any reluctance to go to Sakuntala when she wished to hold him. His opinion, however, was in turn contradicted by women in the group of family members and villagers who usually monitor our interviews in India; some of them asserted that Navalkishore had refused to be held by Sakuntala. These women must have believed confidently in what they were saying; otherwise they would not have dared to contradict a senior male member of their clan, such as Om Prakash.

Navalkishore's Birthmark

Figure 10-13 shows Navalkishore's birthmark as it appeared (so far as the photograph represents its appearance) in March 1979. The birthmark was an area of erythema slightly to the left of the midline at the lower part of the head where it joins the neck. The area in question was violet-red in color. It was approximately round in shape, and I estimate its dimensions as about 5 centimeters by 6 centimeters. It was slightly longer in the vertical axis compared with the horizontal one.

Siri Prakash Yadav said that no other member of the family had a birthmark at the location of Navalkishore's.

Kusum said that she had a normal delivery without, so far as she could remember, any injury to Navalkishore. Navalkishore was a full-term baby delivered in the home with a midwife present.

Kusum had first noticed Navalkishore's birthmark about a month after his birth. She knew nothing about birthmarks related to previous lives and attached no importance to Navalkishore's.[23] However, her husband and his father told her they thought that it might derive from the knot in the rope with which Krishna had hanged himself.

[23]Ignorance of birthmarks related to previous lives is common among Indian informants. As I mentioned in Chapter 1, in comparison with the cases of such countries as Burma, Turkey, and northwestern North America, birthmarks (and birth defects) are reported rather rarely in India in cases of the reincarnation type. The parents of Indian children are not in the habit of examining their *(continued)*

Figure 10-14 The back of Navalkishore's neck as it appeared in October 1979, when he was 1 year old. The previously prominent birthmark, although faintly visible to the eye, does not appear in the photograph.

Comment. Krishna's prediction of being reborn in Siri Prakash Yadav's family and the announcing dreams notified them of the possibility that Navalkishore was Krishna reborn; this in turn made them favor explaining Navalkishore's birthmark as due to the knot in the rope with which Krishna had hanged himself.

Figure 10-14 shows the area of the birthmark as it appeared 6 months later. I could convince myself that a faint residue was still visible, but I do not pretend

[23]*(continued)* newborn babies for birthmarks related to previous lives. They notice birthmarks and birth defects that are prominent, but may easily overlook others that parents in the other countries mentioned would quickly notice soon after a child's birth.

Yet there are exceptions also. Parents of the previous personalities in the cases of Savitri Devi Pathak and Juggi Lal Agarwal expected a subject having memories of their child to have also an appropriate birthmark.

that the photograph has reproduced this. For practical purposes the birthmark had faded by October 1979.

As I mentioned in the report of Yvonne Ehrlich's case, small areas of increased redness at the back of the neck occur transiently in many babies. These areas, often called "salmon patches," are a type of nevus flammeus (Solomon and Esterly, 1973). The data concerning the incidence of this condition that I cited in the report of Yvonne Ehrlich's case all derived from the examination of Caucasian and Negro children, although the California series (Jacobs and Walton, 1976) included some babies of Asian origin. I know no study of the incidence of nuchal "salmon patches" in Asian babies.

Even though many newborn babies have nuchal "salmon patches" similar to Navalkishore's, more babies do not have them, and so we are entitled to ask why one occurred in his case.

If we accept that Navalkishore's birthmark may derive from the previous life of Krishna, we need to consider four separate marks on Krishna to which it might correspond. First, there is a slight possibility that Navalkishore's mark corresponds to the scars of wounds made by the red-hot wires applied to Krishna when he was being treated for malnutrition as a young child. From what I could learn, however, the scars of these burns were lower on the neck than Navalkishore's birthmark, and Krishna's mother asserted definitely that Navalkishore's birthmark did not correspond to them.

There remain three other marks on Krishna's neck that might correspond to Navalkishore's birthmark. These are: the mark left by the knot of the rope with which Krishna hanged himself; the slight wound or wounds cut in the skin by the gardening implement used for cutting the knot; and the blood that oozed out around any such wound and was left on the skin when Krishna's body was cremated. Concerning the last possibility, we have other cases in which blood left on a cremated body has appeared to correspond to birthmarks on the subject of one of these cases.

THE CASE OF WILLIAM GEORGE, JR.

Introduction

I have published a detailed report of this case and will therefore only summarize it here and describe William George, Jr.'s birthmarks. These were hyperpigmented macules located on his shoulder and forearm at the sites of nevi on his paternal grandfather, of whom William George, Jr. was thought to be the reincarnation.

Summary of the Case

William George, Sr. was a notable Tlingit fisherman. Like most Tlingits of his generation, he believed in reincarnation, but may have had some doubts con-

cerning it. He said repeatedly that he would reincarnate as the son of his favorite son, Reginald George. He proposed two tests for his future identification.

First, he predicted that the body of his next incarnation would have two birthmarks at places where he had two birthmarks (hyperpigmented nevi). Reginald George did not remember later that his father had predicted the occurrence of *two* birthmarks, but his wife remembered this distinctly. She told me that her father-in-law had two birthmarks, one on his left shoulder and one on his left forearm, and that he pointed to these when he predicted his reincarnation. At the time I investigated this case in 1961, Reginald George could remember only one birthmark on his father, that on the left shoulder. However, a friend of William George, Sr. corroborated his daughter-in-law's statement that William George, Sr. had had two birthmarks, one in each of the places mentioned.

Second, William George, Sr. gave a gold watch to his son and asked him to keep it for him to have after he was reborn. He did this in the summer of 1949. Reginald George gave the watch to his wife and mentioned his father's plan to reclaim it in his next life. She put it away in a jewelry box, where it remained, more or less forgotten, for about 5 years. In August 1949, William George, Sr. disappeared from the seine boat of which he was captain. He probably fell overboard and drowned accidentally; his body was never recovered, perhaps having been carried out to sea by the high tides of Alaska.

Not long after the death of William George, Sr., his daughter-in-law became pregnant, and on May 5, 1950, she delivered (in a hospital in Juneau, Alaska) a son, the 9th of her 10 children. During her labor, she dreamed that William George, Sr. appeared to her and said that he was waiting to see his son. She did not at first connect the dream with her father-in-law's prediction that he would reincarnate. She had forgotten about this at the time, and the dream had been so vivid that when she awoke from the anesthetic given her for the delivery, she actually expected to see her father-in-law, perhaps as an apparition, in his well-known adult form. Instead, she found she had given birth to a baby boy who had two prominent birthmarks: one on his left shoulder and one on his left forearm. The baby was called William George, Jr.

Between the ages of about 3 and 5, William George, Jr. made a small number of statements and recognitions indicative of his having memories of the life of William George, Sr. The most impressive of these was his recognition of the gold watch that his grandfather had given to his father a few weeks before he died. As I mentioned above, the watch had been put away and kept in a box until an occasion when William George, Jr. was about 4½ years old. His mother happened one day to sort through the various objects in her jewelry box and spread them out in her bedroom. Without thinking about the watch's history, she took it out of the box along with the other items. William George, Jr. came into the room, noticed the gold watch, picked it up, and said: "That's my watch." In addition to recognizing the gold watch spontaneously, William George, Jr. showed a strong possessiveness about it, was with difficulty persuaded to give it back to his mother, and afterwards from time to time asked his parents to give him "his watch."

William George, Jr. had a mild phobia of water. However, he seems never to have referred to his grandfather's death. Toward members of his family he adopted attitudes and names of relationships appropriate for his grandfather. Thus he referred to his great-aunt as "sister." He referred to his uncles and aunts (brothers and sisters of Reginald George) as his "sons and daughters" and expressed paternal concern about their welfare. Members of his family at first entered into these ideas of relationships and called him "grandfather." However, his father thought that William George, Jr. was becoming too preoccupied with the previous life and discouraged him from talking about it.

William George, Jr. had a somewhat odd manner of walking in which he turned his right foot outward. This gait resembled his grandfather's. William George, Sr. had severely injured his right ankle when he was a young man and afterwards had a noticeable limp and walked with his right foot turned outward.

William George, Jr.'s Birthmarks

I did not obtain photographs of William George, Jr.'s birthmarks, but I made a sketch of them, and this at least shows their locations (Figure 10-15).

Both the birthmarks were hyperpigmented macules. They were in general round in shape, and each was about 3 millimeters in diameter.

William George, Jr.'s mother said that the birthmarks at the same sites on her father-in-law had been twice as large as those on her son, that is, about 0.6 centimeter in diameter.[24] They were otherwise similar in appearance to those of William George, Jr. Reginald George thought that the nevus on his father's left shoulder (the only one of the two that he remembered in 1961) had been slightly raised, but his wife did not remember this feature.

Other Relevant Medical Information. I did not examine the other members of the family to see for myself whether any of them had pigmented nevi at the sites of those of William George, Sr. and his grandson. However, I believe that none of them had such birthmarks. The correspondence in locations of the birthmarks on grandfather and grandson led William George, Jr.'s parents to name him after his grandfather; they would not have done this and also later emphasized the importance of the birthmarks in their testimony about the case to me, if they had not themselves been positive that no other member of the family had nevi at the same locations.

Comment

In Chapter 9 I reviewed evidence from published pedigrees that show the occasional heritability of nevi like those of William George, Jr. and his grand-

[24]In my earlier report of this case (Stevenson, 1966/1974b) I gave the sizes of the nevi on William George, Jr. and on his grandfather in inches and incorrectly stated them to have been somewhat larger than they were.

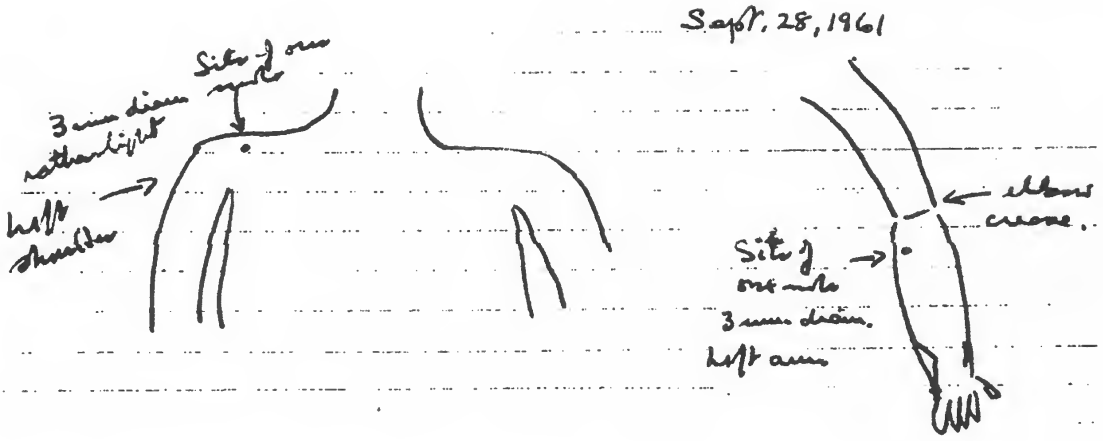

Figure 10-15 Sketches made in 1961 of the location of the hyperpigmented macules on the left shoulder and left forearm of William George, Jr.
The sketch on the left shows William George Jr.'s back, because the macule (called a mole by me then) was slightly posterior to the midline of the shoulder.

father. Moreover, in some rare instances, including one that I studied myself (the case of Dr. Birendra Narain), one generation may be skipped before a nevus appears at the same location again in the following generation. We cannot, therefore, exclude the possibility that the nevi on William George, Jr. derived from inheritance from his grandfather. However, the question remains of why 1 child out of 10 in the family—William George, Jr.—had such nevi when the others did not. If to this question we add the need to explain the prediction, the announcing dream, and William George, Jr.'s statements, recognitions, and behavior related to the life of his grandfather, reincarnation deserves consideration as an interpretation that could account for all features of the case.

THE CASE OF HURİYE BUGAY

Introduction

This case includes four features not often found in the same case: a prediction by a person that she will be reborn in the same family; a later prediction (after the person's death) that this same person, when reborn, will have a particular birthmark corresponding to a birthmark on the deceased person; the predicted birthmark on the subject; and unusual behavior corresponding to similar behavior that the deceased person showed. Nevertheless, the subject of the case never had any imaged memories of the previous life; at least she never spoke about any.

Summary of the Case and Its Investigation

Huriye Bugay was born in Adana, Turkey, on April 24, 1963. Her parents were Garip Bugay and his wife, Fatma. They were Turks and Sunni Moslems.[25] Huriye was the second of their two daughters; they had no sons. Huriye's older sister, Mihriban, was about 4½ years older than Huriye. At the time I studied Huriye's case, Garip Bugay was Director of a Government Agricultural Research Institute near Ceyhan, in the province of Adana. He lived with his family in a house of the Institute's compound at a village called Cemilye, and it was there that I met Huriye and her parents.

Huriye's maternal grandmother, Mediha Hamdi, had predicted before her death that if she reincarnated, she would come back in her family. She died in 1962. Some months later, Fatma Bugay became pregnant, but considered terminating the pregnancy. Being interested in spiritualism, she went to a medium and received a communication seeming to come from her mother in which the latter categorically forbade her to have an abortion. This séance took place soon after Fatma Bugay learned of her pregnancy, that is, during its first trimester. She followed the instructions—one might almost say command—of the communicator and allowed her pregnancy to continue.

A few weeks before Huriye's birth, Fatma's sister-in-law, Hikmet Hamdi (who was herself a medium), was the subject of another séance at which her deceased father-in-law (Fatma's father) seemed to communicate and predicted the rebirth of his wife, Mediha, as the expected baby of Fatma. This communication gave some further particulars of which the most important was that the baby would have a birthmark corresponding to a birthmark that Mediha had had. Fatma's pregnancy was entirely normal, and she delivered her baby, Huriye, at term.

When Huriye was born, she was found to have a birthmark (Figure 10-16) on the right buttock at the site of a birthmark that Mediha had had.

Huriye never later claimed to remember any details of her grandmother's life. She did, however, show some unusual behavior in which she resembled her grandmother and differed markedly from her older sister, Mihriban.

I learned of this case in 1971 from Dr. Mehmet Karadayi (of İskenderun), who had been helpful to me in the study of the case of Mehmet Samioğlu. In March 1971, Reşat Bayer and I met Huriye and interviewed her parents. Fatma Bugay referred us to her brother, Halil Hamdi (Hikmet's husband), for particulars about the second mediumistic séance and about her mother's birthmark. Halil Hamdi was then living in İzmir, and Reşat Bayer corresponded with him from Istanbul. They exchanged four letters between February 1972 and February 1974. Reşat Bayer translated the essential contents of Halil Hamdi's four letters from Turkish into French for me. (We never met Halil Hamdi or his wife.) In 1985 Dr.

[25]Nearly all the cases that I have studied in Turkey have occurred among the Alevis who are of Arabic origin and mainly Arabic-speaking (Stevenson, 1980). The majority of Turks are Sunni Moslems, and the present case is one of the few known to me that have occurred in that group.

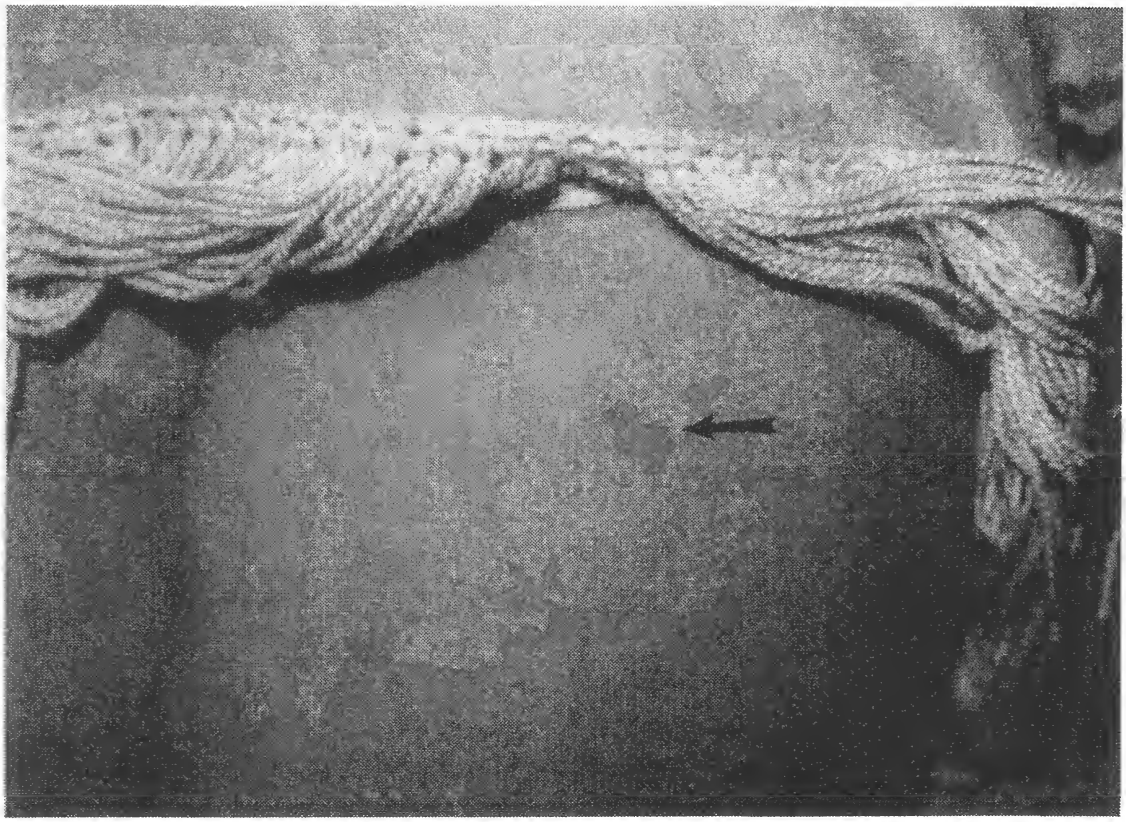

Figure 10-16 Birthmark on Huriye Bugay as it appeared in September 1973, when she was about 10½ years old. The birthmark was a hyperpigmented macule, round in shape and approximately 1.5 centimeters in diameter. It was located on the posterior aspect of the right thigh just below the buttock.

Can Polat corresponded again, on my behalf, with Halil Hamdi and obtained some additional information about details in the case. Dr. Polat and Halil Hamdi also had one telephone conversation about the case.

During the period of the initial correspondence with Halil Hamdi, Reşat Bayer and I met Huriye and her parents again, in February 1973. At the time, Huriye's mother talked with us further about ways in which Huriye seemed to resemble her mother in her behavior. I photographed Huriye's birthmark, but my photographs were unsuccessful, and we had to request permission to take others. We returned to Cemilye for this purpose in September 1973. At this time we learned nothing further of major importance to the understanding of the case, but I succeeded with the photography.

Huriye was a little under 8 years old when we first met her in 1971 and on either side of 10 when we met on the two separate occasions in 1973.

The Life, Death, and Character of Mediha Hamdi

Mediha Hamdi was born in about 1898 in Maraş, Turkey. We learned little about her early life, but she became quite well educated for a Turkish woman of

the period when she grew up. In those days, before Kemal Atatürk instigated (in the 1920s) the development of an alphabet expressly for the Turkish language, Turkish was written in Arabic script. The Koran was then still written in Arabic, and Mediha learned enough Arabic so that she could read the Koran. This accomplishment accorded also with another of her traits: a strong interest in religion. Before she married, Mediha worked as a schoolteacher.

She married Salih Hamdi and they had two children: a son, Halil, and a daughter, Fatma (Huriye's mother). She had other children, but they had died before Fatma's birth in 1932.

When Fatma grew up, she became attracted to Garip Bugay and proposed to marry him. Her brother, Halil, opposed this marriage and tried to stop it, even though the couple had the approval of Mediha and her husband, Salih. (Halil confided the details of his opposition to the marriage and subsequent related events to Reşat Bayer during their correspondence; he never mentioned any grounds for his opposition to his sister's marriage and admitted its irrationality.) Fatma and Garip were married on November 8, 1957. After his sister's marriage, Halil Hamdi continued to intervene in it. As he admitted later, he magnified insignificant marital spats between his sister and her husband into major conflicts and tried to influence his sister to divorce her husband; but she stayed with him. This strife was a source of considerable strain on Mediha.

Mediha suffered from hypertension, and from about 1957 until her death in 1962, she was more or less an invalid. She was cared for by her daughter-in-law, Hikmet Hamdi (Halil's second wife, he having divorced his first wife). Her husband, Salih, had died in 1957, and perhaps this event contributed to her invalidism.

In the spring of 1962, Mediha's health declined, and she sensed that she was going to die. She called her son to her bedside and asked him, among her last wishes, to desist from interfering in his sister's marriage and accept his brother-in-law in good friendship. Halil promised that he would do this. Mediha died 2 weeks later, on April 14, 1962, in İskenderun. Her death was attributed (by Halil) to a cerebral hemorrhage.

I have already mentioned that Mediha was an intensely religious person. She was inclined to believe in reincarnation, but had some reservations concerning it related to her strong belief in the Moslem religion. Halil, who had become a spiritualist and a strong believer in reincarnation, tried to persuade his mother that there was nothing inconsistent between believing in reincarnation and subscribing to the teachings of Islam. He wrote to Reşat Bayer that his mother had told her daughter-in-law (his wife, Hikmet)—he himself not being a witness of this—that if life after death turned out to be as her son believed it was (meaning if reincarnation occurs), she would, after her death, come back again among them.

During the period of Mediha's invalidism before she died, Hikmet Hamdi often had occasion (as she was nursing her mother-in-law) to notice a birthmark on her right buttock. Mediha's son never saw this birthmark himself, but obtained from his wife a precise description of it, which he communicated to Reşat Bayer. The birthmark was round or oval and 5 millimeters in diameter. It was light brown in color and

located on the lateral inferior quadrant of the right buttock.[26] Halil Hamdi included a sketch of the birthmark's location that he drew from his wife's description of it.

Fatma Bugay had at one time seen the birthmark on her mother's buttock, but when I met her in 1971 she could not recall on which side it had been. At this point in our conversation she had not yet examined with us the birthmark on Huriye's leg; if she had recently done so, she would probably have told us that her mother's birthmark was on the right thigh, because she, as well as her husband and brother, believed that Huriye's birthmark was located at exactly the same place as the birthmark on her mother.

Mediha did not predict (as had the previous personalities in the cases of Corliss Chotkin, Jr. and William George, Jr.) that she could be identified in her next incarnation by a birthmark corresponding to the birthmark on her buttock. However, a prediction of this type occurred in a mediumistic séance, and I give next a brief account of it.

A Mediumistic Communication with Prediction of a Birthmark

I mentioned above that Halil Hamdi was a spiritualist. At about the time of his second marriage, to Hikmet, he learned that Hikmet had precognitive dreams. (Halil sent brief reports of several of these to Reşat Bayer.) She then developed as a trance medium and from time to time went into trance with her husband and other persons present. In the spring of 1963, Hikmet had been told that she should have a surgical operation, and she and her husband decided that before agreeing to the operation they would have a mediumistic séance with a view to obtaining advice about the operation from a discarnate personality. The séance was held in İskenderun, where Halil and Hikmet were then living, on April 5, 1963.[27] Hikmet went into a trance, and Halil's father, Salih (who had died in 1957), communicated.[28] (Halil did not say what advice

[26]I have referred to the mark on Mediha's right buttock as a birthmark and believe it was a congenital hyperpigmented macule. Her daughter, Fatma, talked of it as a birthmark. However, her son, Halil, was not quite positive that it was congenital. He had himself never seen it, and his wife, Hikmet, who had, could only state that it had been present from 1958. This was the year when Halil and Hikmet married, and it must have been at about this time that Hikmet began to give her mother-in-law nursing care and in doing so would have seen the back of her legs and buttocks. Halil said that his mother had never had any injury of any kind, so the mark could not have been the scar of an injury. It might conceivably have been the scar of a furuncle, but this seems improbable.

[27]Fatma and Garip Bugay gave us secondhand accounts of this séance and referred to the communication as coming in a dream. The letter from Halil Hamdi of April 21, 1971, left no doubt that Hikmet was in some kind of dissociated state, which we may as well call a trance. The séance was not tape-recorded, and our information about it derives from Halil Hamdi's memory and the secondhand accounts of Huriye's parents.

[28]I use the word *communicated* here with the meaning customary in psychical research. The word refers to a personality that is phenomenally different from the medium's ordinary personality and that purports to be a discarnate personality. Some mediumistic communicators are indubitably formed from aspects of the medium's personality that are ordinarily unexpressed. However, there is evidence suggesting, although falling short of proof, that a few communicators may be the discarnate personalities they claim to be. My use of the word in the present and similar contexts does not affirm or deny that the communicator was a discarnate personality.

they received about Hikmet's proposed operation; this was off the main point of our inquiries, but they must have received a general approval, because Hikmet later had the operation.) During the course of the séance, the communicator gratuitously introduced several predictions about the baby that Fatma was to have a few weeks later. He said that the baby would be born on April 24, would be a girl, would be the reincarnation of Mediha Hamdi, and would have a particular birthmark on her body. Halil Hamdi in his letter communicating this information to Reşat Bayer (dated April 21, 1971) did not say that the prediction included mention of the birthmark's location. However, in his telephone conversation with Dr. Polat in 1985, he stated that the communicator *had* specified where Huriye's birthmark would be. That the members of the family believed Huriye's birthmark was at the same location as Mediha's comes from another statement Halil Hamdi made. He said that after Huriye's birth he examined his sister, Fatma, to ascertain for himself whether *she* had a birthmark at the site of Huriye's and the birthmark on his mother. (He wrote that Fatma had no birthmark there and also that he himself had none.) Garip Bugay recalled in February 1971 that during the 2½ weeks that elapsed between the mediumistic prediction and Huriye's birth, members of the family had talked about his mother-in-law's mark and the prediction that Fatma's baby would have a birthmark at the same place. He also remembered that when Huriye was born, he had been away from home and was notified of the event by a telegram. He went home and was immediately shown the birthmark on Huriye's thigh, which, he was told, was at the site of the one on his mother-in-law.

Huriye's Behavior Related to the Previous Life

Fatma Bugay mentioned to us several of Huriye's talents and behavioral traits in which she resembled her grandmother Mediha. In these features Huriye differed markedly (with one exception) from her older sister, Mihriban. We did not ask Fatma with regard to each of the following traits whether she and her husband also had them, but she said or implied that they had not, or did not have them to the degree that Huriye showed them. However, Fatma mainly compared Huriye's behavior with that of her older sister.

I asked Fatma Bugay whether Huriye treated her as a mother might, but she said Huriye did not do this; perhaps there was a hint of a maternal attitude toward her mother in Huriye's strong preoccupation with having everything properly in its place. Fatma Bugay told us in 1971 about some of the traits that I shall mention, but she told us about additional ones in 1973. She may have forgotten these earlier and then recalled them in the interval between our interviews. In 1973 she said that Huriye was behaving even more like her grandmother than she had been earlier.

I have already mentioned Mediha's strong interest in religion; Huriye showed a similar interest in religion when a young child.

Huriye and her grandmother were both unusually fond of eating cucumbers and watermelons; and they both disliked yogurt. They both liked to add salt to their food served at table; Huriye even added salt before she had tasted the served food. Mediha's fondness for salt had been frustrated in the last years of her life

when, presumably as part of the treatment of hypertension, her doctor had instructed her not to add salt to her food.

Mediha knew how to sew well. Huriye, even as a young child, often asked her mother to give her scissors and some pieces of cloth so that she could do some sewing. Mediha was an extremely orderly person who liked everything to be exactly in its place. Huriye showed this same trait, perhaps even exceeding her grandmother in having an almost obsessional concern about orderliness.

Both Huriye and her grandmother had superior memories. Fatma described her mother's memory as "perfect," and said that Huriye's memory was "also excellent." Huriye was an eager learner and stood at the top of her class during the years when I was meeting her. She was superior in intelligence to her older sister.

Both Huriye and her grandmother interested themselves in sick people and expressed sympathy for them.

Huriye's father, Garip Bugay, had not known his mother-in-law nearly as well as his wife (her daughter) knew her. Accordingly, he could not speak about the resemblance between his daughter and his mother-in-law with as much authority as his wife could. He said, however, that he had heard "everyone" say how much Huriye resembled her grandmother. He himself could testify to the strong religiosity and the fondness for cucumbers that both showed; and he thought that Huriye's superior intelligence corresponded to his mother-in-law's.

In Table 10-3 I have listed all the traits that Mediha and Huriye were said to have in common about which I learned sufficient detail to justify my including them. Fatma Bugay mentioned some other similarities between her mother and daughter with less supporting detail.

Other Relevant Behavior of Huriye

Huriye was more advanced in social development than her older sister had been at the same age. One indication of this was that older children of the age of Mihriban (who was 4½ years older than Huriye) enjoyed playing with Huriye.

As have many other subjects of these cases, Huriye showed at times what I have called an "adult attitude." She would enter into a conversation like an adult and sometimes gave advice based on her knowledge of religious teachings. Her rebuking of other persons for their disorderliness also illustrates her "adult attitude."

Fatma Bugay said that Huriye's teacher, Seniye Özel, had also been Mihriban's teacher, and she suggested that we meet her. She said that Seniye Özel had described Huriye as having already "a mature personality."

We accepted this suggestion, and in March 1971 we met Seniye Özel at her school. She praised Huriye equally for her scholastic accomplishments and her blameless conduct in school. She said that Huriye "seemed like an adult person in a child's body."[29]

[29]Huriye illustrated well the trait that I call "adult behavior." Other subjects who showed this behavior include Nirankar Bhatnagar, Chanai Choomalaiwong, Pratima Saxena, and Sanjeev Sharma.

Table 10-3. **List of Traits in which Huriye Resembled Her Grandmother and Differed from Her Older Sister, Mihriban**

Mediha's Trait	*Huriye*	*Mihriban*
Strong interest in religion	Yes	No
Compassion for sick persons	Yes	No
Fondness for watermelons, cucumbers, and salt	Yes	No
Distaste for yogurt	Yes	No
Interest in sewing	Yes	No
Strong wish for orderliness in placement of household objects	Yes	No; on the contrary, Mihriban was apt to be disorderly
Superior memory	Yes	No direct information
Superior intelligence	Yes	Not so intelligent as Huriye

The Attitudes of the Adults Concerned toward the Case

At the time of the mediumistic communication received by Hikmet Hamdi 2½ weeks before Huriye's birth, Fatma and her husband, who already had one daughter, were hoping their next baby would be a boy. So was Halil Hamdi, who had no living children of his own and would have liked to have a nephew.

After the mediumistic communication Halil and Fatma became convinced that the baby would be their mother reincarnated. Halil Hamdi went so far as to have a small bracelet made for the baby (still not born) with the name *Mediha* inscribed on it. At this time (just before Huriye's birth), Garip Bugay remained skeptical. He had no interest in spiritualism and no confidence in mediumistic communications. However, he told us that after Huriye's birth when she was found to have a birthmark corresponding to her grandmother's, he became more open-minded. His own words were: "Afterward I began gradually to believe in these phenomena."

Other Relevant Observations

I asked Fatma Bugay whether she noticed during her pregnancy with Huriye that she herself developed some of the likes and dislikes that her mother and daughter shared, but that ordinarily she did not. I was thinking as an example that she might have had an unusual fondness for cucumbers during her pregnancy. However, she had noticed no change from her usual appetites.

Huriye's Birthmarks

Huriye had two birthmarks on the back of her right thigh, and during 1971 I was led (by Fatma Bugay) to think that the lower of these (located a few centimeters above the back of the right knee) corresponded to the mark on Huriye's

grandmother. However, at the time of our next meeting in February 1973, we learned that Huriye had two birthmarks, both on the back of her right thigh: one a few centimeters above the right knee and a second one high up on the thigh a few centimeters below the fold of the buttock on the back of the thigh (Figure 10-16). This second birthmark was larger and darker in color than the lower one. It was almost at the exact place indicated for the mark on Mediha by her daughter-in-law, Hikmet. However, at this time it was not on the lower part of the buttock, but on the upper thigh just below the buttock; it had moved a little inferiorly since Huriye's birth. Halil Hamdi, in one of his letters to Reşat Bayer, mentioned this movement of the birthmark.

According to Halil Hamdi, who must have examined Huriye's pertinent birthmark soon after her birth, it had then been at exactly the place where his mother's mark had been. Because Halil himself had never seen his mother's birthmark, it is important to note that his wife, Hikmet, who had seen Mediha's birthmark often, examined Huriye's birthmark with him. Hikmet was in a better position than anyone to affirm the correspondence in location between the two birthmarks. Subsequently, as Huriye grew, the birthmark had migrated from the lower part of the buttock to the upper part of the thigh, where it was in 1973.

Huriye's birthmark as shown in Figure 10-16, taken when she was 10½ years old, was a hyperpigmented macule, dark brown in color, more or less round, and approximately 1.5 centimeters in diameter.

No other member of the family had a birthmark at the site of those on Mediha and Huriye. I did not myself examine other members of the family. However, all three of our principal informants, Fatma and Garip Bugay and Halil Hamdi, agreed on this point. As I mentioned, Halil had actually examined his own sister, being evidently determined to exclude heredity as a factor in the case. He could also testify that he himself had no such birthmark, and he also wrote as if he had himself examined Huriye's older sister, Mihriban, although he did not state this explicitly.

Comment

This case has some important weaknesses that I shall now review. Perhaps the first of these is the expectation that the mediumistic prediction aroused in the adults concerned: that Mediha Hamdi was going to reincarnate as Fatma's baby. The belief that Huriye was Mediha returned to the family in a new body may have biased Fatma's observations of apparent similarities between the behavior of her mother and that of her daughter. She may have unconsciously magnified traits in which Huriye seemed to resemble her mother and diminished the strength of similar traits that her other daughter showed. Although her husband supported her observations of the differences between their two daughters, he was not, as I have explained, as well qualified as his wife to describe these to us.

We cannot say positively that Hikmet Hamdi's mediumistic communication contained paranormal knowledge. She might have taken information known to her

normally and developed it into a seeming communication from her deceased father-in-law. For example, the exact date of Huriye's birth might have been guessed at the time of the séance, when Fatma was close to delivering her baby. This detail of the prediction would have impressed me more, if it had been given either much earlier in the pregnancy or had specified some unusual date for the delivery, perhaps indicating prematurity or postmaturity. We need to remember also that Hikmet had often seen her invalid mother-in-law's birthmark while she was giving her nursing care. This makes me think that she might have developed the idea herself that, if Mediha were to be reborn, she would have a birthmark at the same site in the new life as in the previous one.

The foregoing objections, however, do not explain the correspondence in location between the birthmarks on grandmother and granddaughter. All the adults concerned agreed about this correspondence. We might omit Fatma Bugay from the list of witnesses qualified on this point, since by 1971 she had forgotten on which side her mother's birthmark had been, and she had also forgotten which was the pertinent birthmark on Huriye. If we do this, however, we still have the statement on this point of Halil Hamdi (who transmitted his wife's testimony) and also that of Garip Bugay, although Garip depended on the Hamdis for his information about the location of the birthmark on his mother-in-law.

Despite the weaknesses in the evidence that I have mentioned, I believe that the birthmarks on Mediha and Huriye do correspond, and with a closeness of location that is unlikely to have occurred by chance. However, even this correspondence may have a normal explanation; heredity is a possible explanation for it. Huriye was a direct descendent of her grandmother, and, as I explained in Chapter 9, we cannot exclude heredity just because her mother and uncle had no similar birthmark.

Thus every feature of the case may reasonably receive a normal explanation. However, we should have to combine different types of normal explanation: faulty observations of Huriye's unusual behavior would have to be combined either with faulty memories of the correspondence between the birthmarks or, if this correspondence is admitted, with inheritance as an explanation for the correspondence.

If we pass to paranormal interpretations, we should first consider a maternal impression. Fatma Bugay had seen the birthmark on her mother's buttock, and she had it drawn vividly to her attention by the mediumistic communication just 2½ weeks before Huriye's birth. A maternal impression on her unborn baby is therefore a possible interpretation of the birthmark; if we favor it, however, we must then attribute the reports of a close correspondence between Huriye's behavior and that of Mediha either to malobservation on the part of Fatma or to a subtle imposition on Huriye of behavior appropriate for her (Fatma's) mother.

Reincarnation accounts for all features of the case with a single explanation, but I am far from asserting that the case provides important evidence for reincarnation. Perhaps we should regard it as an example of a type of case that deserves notice and investigation at an earlier stage of development than we achieved in Huriye's case.

BIRTHMARKS CORRESPONDING TO MARKS MADE ON THE BODY OF A DYING OR RECENTLY DECEASED PERSON: EXPERIMENTAL BIRTHMARKS

Introduction

In the type of predicted birthmark that I shall now describe, the previous personality had no mark, when alive and well, at the site of the subject's birthmark. Instead, relatives (or sometimes friends) of a dying person (or one who has just died) mark the person's body with the expectation that a birthmark will occur at the same site on the body with which the dying or dead person will be associated in his or her next terrestrial life.

As I mentioned earlier, my colleagues and I refer to birthmarks of this class as experimental birthmarks. I hope this is not too presumptuous a phrase. It should not seem so if the reader remembers that experiments can be performed outside laboratories and by persons without formal training in science. The persons who mark the body of a dying (or dead) person believe that the related birthmark will be unique (in his or her family) and that the marking of the dying (or dead) person is the sole variable factor in the occurrence of the birthmark. In this sense they conduct an experiment to see whether a person will be born afterward who has a birthmark at the site marked and who later perhaps expresses memories of the life of the marked person.

The persons marking the body usually expect and hope that the marked person will be reborn in the same family or at least in a nearby one, so that they can be reunited with him or her. As we shall see, a person with a birthmark corresponding to the mark is often born later in the family of the deceased person; but cases occur also in which the subject (with the related birthmark) is born in a different family, occasionally one far removed from that of the previous personality. When they are able to speak, some of the subjects having this type of birthmark say they remember the life of the marked person, but others do not. If the person marked is a baby or young infant, no imaged memories occur in the related subject. Subjects who have imaged memories remember the lives of persons who died in older childhood or adulthood.

The Dalai Lama (1962) described a typical example of this type of birthmark that occurred in his own family. One of his younger brothers died as an infant of 2 years. His parents were advised (apparently by an oracle) to preserve the dead boy's body (instead of burying it), because he would be reborn in the same family. The Dalai Lama's account continues:

> As proof, a small mark was to be made on the body with a smear of butter. This was done and in due course my mother had another baby boy—her last child. And when he was born the pale mark was seen on the spot of his body where the butter had been smeared. He was the same being, born again in a new body to start his life afresh.

The material most commonly used for marking the body of the dying or dead person is soot from a cooking pot; however, charcoal, ochre, and other materials may be used, and in one case that I studied (Ma Choe Hnin Htet) the person marking the body used lipstick. The mark is usually placed on a part of the body that is ordinarily clothed, so that the upper arms, legs and feet, chest, abdomen, and back are the usual sites. In two cases reported in this work the wrist was marked, and in two others the back of the neck was marked. In Burma and Thailand the face and front of the neck are rarely marked, and the case of Ma Khin Nyo Htwe is exceptional in my experience. However, the practice may differ in other regions; Parry (1932) described the marking of the cheek and "the side of the head" in two cases among the Lakhers, who live in Assam, India.

The practice I am describing occurs in a wide area of Asia, including Tibet (Dalai Lama, 1962), China (De Groot, 1901/1969), Burma (Mi Mi Khaing, 1962), and Thailand (DeYoung, 1966; Rajadhon, 1961). In India, the marking of dead bodies (for later identification of the person when he or she reincarnates) has been reported among the Lakhers of Assam (Parry, 1932), the tribes of central India (Parkin, 1988), and in Rajasthan (Gold, 1989). Dr. Pasricha and I studied a case of this type in Rajasthan in 1992. In more than 30 years of studying cases in other parts of India, especially northern India from the Punjab to West Bengal, I have never learned of a case of this type in these regions. This does not mean that such cases do not occur there. Perhaps they figure in cases of the same-family type that never become known outside the circle of persons concerned. I also have not learned of similar cases in other parts of the world.

Many of the peoples of West Africa engage in a somewhat similar practice: the mutilation of a dead infant's body with the expectation that it will have a corresponding birth defect if it is reborn. I describe and discuss experimental birth defects in Chapter 20.

The birthmarks in these cases are nearly always flat, hyperpigmented nevi, and their color is usually brown or black. In the case of the Dalai Lama's brother, the birthmark was apparently an area not of increased pigmentation, but of greater pallor than the surrounding skin. In the case of Ma Choe Hnin Htet the birthmark was a type of nevus flammeus ("salmon patch"), red in color.

The cases that I shall present in this section all occurred in Thailand and Burma. I have selected them from among the 35 cases of this type that my associates and I have investigated.

I shall first present some of the weaker cases; these are ones in which we could not meet the person who actually marked the previous personality's body or in which that person did not clearly remember where she had marked the body. (The case of Ma Khin Sandi, presented in Chapter 7, belongs to this group of weaker cases, as to her experimental birthmark.) After these cases, I present others in which the person who marked the dead body was able to tell us that the mark and the apparently related birthmark on the subject were at exactly (or nearly) the same location.

Most of the birthmarks figuring in these cases were on the neck, trunk, or arms. Hyperpigmented macules are commonly found in these areas, although ones

as large as those in some of these cases are rare; and, in the last 2 of the first 12 cases the birthmarks were unusually large and were also on the feet, an infrequent location for hyperpigmented macules.

I investigated 10 of the 12 principal cases of this section myself, with the usual assistance of persons helping me in Thailand and Burma. U Win Maung investigated 2 cases without me, and Daw Hnin Aye obtained additional information for them. Two other cases that I have investigated (Ma Khin Sandi and Ma Win Win Nyunt) are described further elsewhere in this work; and at the end of this chapter I briefly describe six cases that Daw Hnin Aye investigated by herself in a preliminary way. For these cases Daw Hnin Aye obtained a brief history from the subject and one or two informants; but for four of the cases she obtained only secondhand verification of the marking of the previous personality. For these six cases I give for each only a few lines of information about salient features and photographs of the birthmarks.

Although the average white adult has 15 to 18 hyperpigmented nevi (moles) distributed over his or her body (Pack and Davis, 1956), nearly all of these develop in later childhood and early adulthood. Examinations of newborn babies have shown a low incidence of hyperpigmented nevi, including unelevated macules. Jacobs and Walton (1976) reported an incidence of only 0.8%, although in other series the incidence was higher, being 2.4% in one (Pack and Davis, 1956) and 2.7% in another (Pratt, 1953). I believe that in all the cases of experimental birthmarks that my associates and I have studied the subject's parents noted the birthmark immediately after the baby's birth.

THE CASE OF AMPAN PETCHERAT

This was the first case of an experimental birthmark that I investigated. I first learned of it in 1963, but did not investigate it until the years 1966-1971. As I have elsewhere published a detailed account of the case, I shall only summarize it here, giving most attention to Ampan's birthmark.

Ampan Petcherat was born in Song Klong, Thailand, in March 1954. When she was barely a year old, she began to talk to her mother about a previous life, which she said she had lived at a place called Klong Bang Chag. Her mother paid little attention to her remarks, even though Ampan included specific details that were verifiable. When Ampan was about 7, she recognized on the streets of Klong Darn (a marketing town 7 kilometers from Song Klong) a woman whom she identified as her "aunt," meaning of the life she was remembering. Ampan convinced this woman that she had memories of the life of her nephew, a boy called Chuey, who had drowned (in 1950) near his home in Klong Bang Chag. He had been about 4 years old when he drowned. She arranged for Ampan and her mother to meet Chuey's family at Klong Bang Chag, and there Ampan recognized Chuey's parents and sister. At this time also Chuey's family verified her earlier statements about Chuey's life and death as well as two additional ones that she made during the visit.

Ampan's home in Song Klong was 15 kilometers from Chuey's home, and so they were in the same general area. Both families used the marketing town of

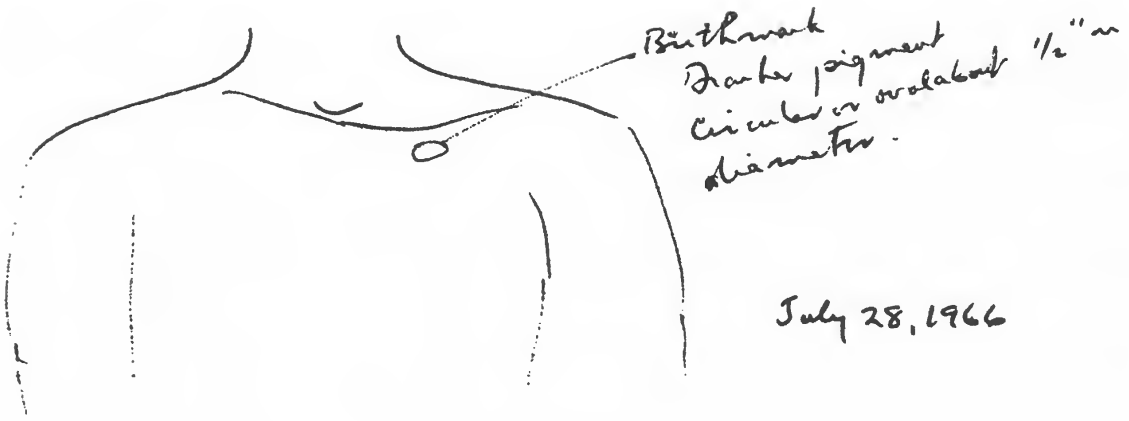

Figure 10-17 Sketch of birthmark on upper left chest of Ampan Petcherat made in 1966, when she was 7 years old. It was a circular or ovoid hyperpigmented macule, approximately 1.2 centimeters in diameter.

Klong Darn, where they might have had some contact, perhaps through patronizing the same shops. However, members of both families denied any familiarity with each other prior to the development of the case, and I believe they had none. One important reason for thinking this comes from the failure for about 6 years of Ampan's mother to attempt to verify what Ampan was saying about a previous life. If she had already known a family corresponding to Ampan's statements, she would have taken her to the family. Instead, she neglected the matter, and Ampan was finally taken to Klong Bang Chag only after she had recognized Chuey's aunt on the street in Klong Darn.

Among the features of the case that impressed the informants was a birthmark that Ampan had. It was still visible in 1966, and I sketched it (Figure 10-17), but did not photograph it. It was a circular or somewhat ovoid hyperpigmented macule, approximately 1.2 centimeters in diameter, located on her upper chest just below the left clavicle.

After Chuey drowned, his great-aunt Tong Puang Pei made a mark with red ochre on the upper chest of his body before it was cremated. Tong Puang Pei was one of the 14 persons whom I interviewed during my investigation of the case. She remembered having made a mark with red ochre on Chuey's upper chest (after he drowned), but in 1966 she could no longer remember on which side of the chest (that is, right or left) she had made the mark. Thus we cannot be positive that Ampan's birthmark corresponded to the mark that Chuey's great-aunt made on his chest.

Comment

Ampan's case is one in which the interpretation of a maternal impression can be eliminated, since the two families were not acquainted before the case developed. Ampan's mother had never heard of Chuey, much less that he had drowned and that his body had been marked with red ochre.

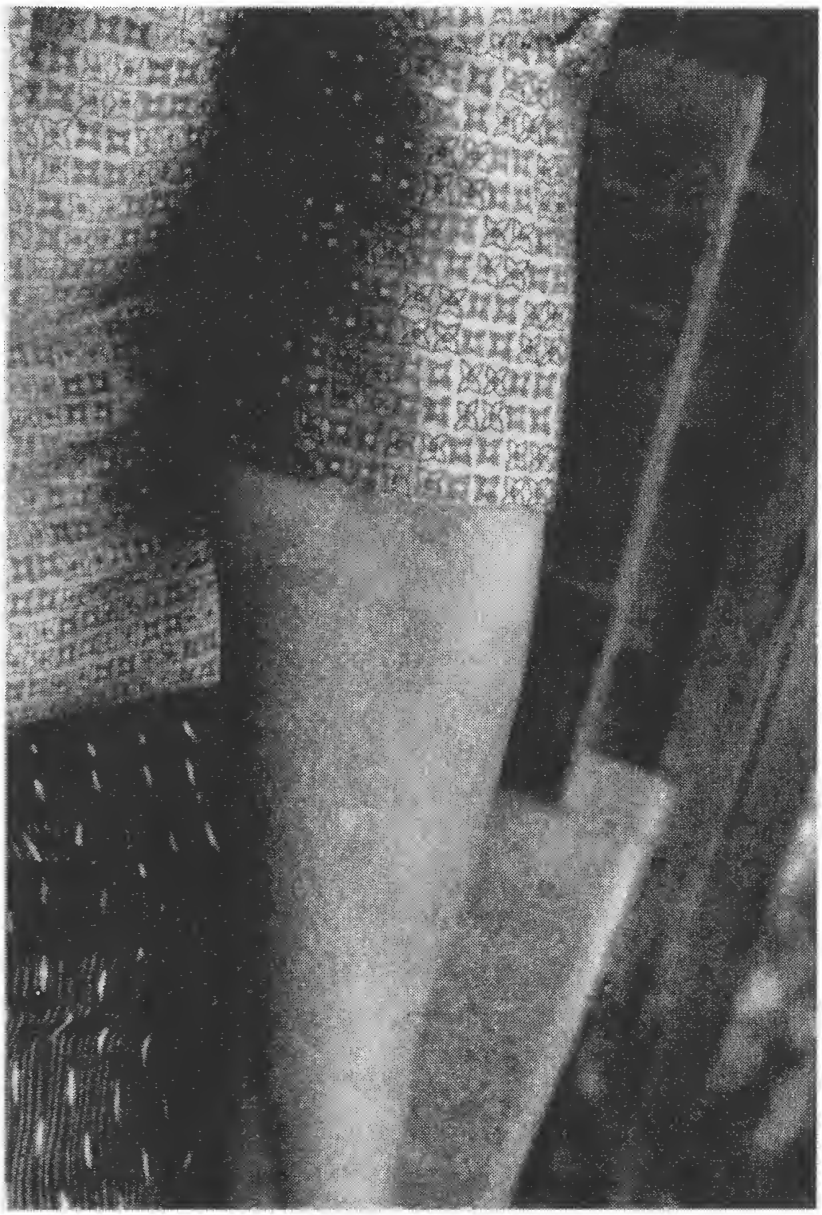

Figure 10-18 Birthmark on Kim Sripayak as it appeared in 1972, when she was 82 years old. The birthmark was an ovoid hyperpigmented macule on the volar surface of the left forearm just inferior to the elbow. Its dimensions were approximately 4 centimeters in length and 2 centimeters in width.
A smaller area of hypopigmentation inferior to the principal birthmark was also a birthmark, but not said to derive from a previous life.

THE CASE OF KIM SRIPAYAK

Kim Sripayak was born in 1890 in Nakhon Sawan, Thailand. Her parents were Prom Tamrong and his wife, Supit. She was the second daughter and third child (among five children altogether) of her parents. At her birth Kim was found to have a birthmark on her left forearm just below the elbow (Figure 10-18). This corresponded to a mark made at the same place on the body of her dead older sister, Trong.

I learned of this case in 1972 from Kim Sripayak's son, Dr. Prakeb Sripayak. He and his mother were then living in Bangkok, and I interviewed them there on November 14, 1972. Dr. Prakeb spoke English, but Tem Suvikrom interpreted for me in talking with his mother.

Kim Sripayak learned about the significance of the birthmark on her arm from her mother, who frequently described to friends what she had done to mark her first, deceased daughter, and as she did so she showed them the birthmark on Kim's arm.

Dr. Prakeb had also heard an account of the marking of Trong from his grandmother. (However, in talking with me at his office, before he took me to meet his mother, he thought her birthmark was on her right arm, whereas it was on her left one.) He said that he had asked his grandmother whether the mark on his mother was at the place where she had marked the body of Trong, and she replied: "Yes, the exact place."

The Death and Marking of Trong

Trong was the second child and first daughter of Prom and Supit Tamrong. She died at the age of about 2. (Of what disease she died was not mentioned to me and may not have been known to Kim Sripayak.)

Shortly before Trong became ill, Supit dreamed about an image of the Buddha that was broken at the neck. She regarded this as a bad omen.

Supit painted some red lime on the left forearm of the dead Trong and, at the same time, prayed that she would be reborn as her daughter and have a long and prosperous life.

Trong died in about 1888. Her body was not cremated but buried. About 6 months after her death Supit became pregnant again. During her pregnancy she dreamed once more of the Buddha's image, but this time with the neck fully restored.

Kim was born about 15 months after Trong's death.

Kim Sripayak's Birthmark

Figure 10-18 shows that Kim's birthmark was a hyperpigmented macule on the volar aspect of the left forearm, just below the elbow. It was ovoid in shape, approximately 4 centimeters at its longest and 2 centimeters at its widest.

Figure 10-18 also shows a smaller area of lessened pigmentation about 6 centimeters inferior to the hyperpigmented macule. This small pale area was also present at Kim's birth. She never asked her mother about its possible cause. She conjectured that perhaps another member of the family had made a second mark on the dead body of Trong, but she had heard no one say this.

Other Medical Information. None of Kim's siblings had a birthmark like hers; in addition to Trong, Kim had one sister and two brothers. She also had seven children of her own, and none of them had a similar birthmark.

Other Information

Kim Sripayak had no memories of a previous life.

THE CASE OF DAW TIN YEE

Introduction

This is another case of an experimental birthmark in which I did not obtain a firsthand account of the mark put on the body of the previous personality. However, I obtained the testimony of the subject's mother, who had learned from the person marking the body that she had done this.

Summary of the Case and Its Investigation

Daw Tin Yee was born on March 16, 1934, in Magyibin village of Tatkon Township, Upper Burma. She was the daughter of U Min Oo and his wife, Daw Pu Lay. She was the fourth of their five children.

Daw Tin Yee was born with an extensive hyperpigmented macule on the anterior surface of the middle part of her right leg (Figure 10-19). This corresponded to a mark made on the body of Daw Pu Lay's paternal aunt, Daw Thon, as she was dying. The mark had been made by Daw Thon's daughter-in-law, Daw Phwa Shin.

Daw Tin Yee made few remarks about the previous life. She claimed that she was Daw Thon, but said little else.

When she grew up, she married U Hla Pe and worked as a shopkeeper in Magyibin village.

U Win Maung and I learned of this case in 1975 and investigated it soon afterwards. On November 13, 1975, we interviewed (in Tatkon) Daw Tin Yee and her mother, Daw Pu Lay. After this beginning, we neglected the case for 4 years. Then, in 1980, we tried to meet Daw Phwa Shin only to learn that she had left Tatkon and settled in a village of the area. In 1984 U Win Maung and I were again in Tatkon, and I renewed the proposal to meet and interview Daw Phwa Shin, but we then learned that she had died. We were thus left with only the secondhand testimony of Daw Pu Lay for the marking on Daw Thon's body.

The Life, Death, and Character of Daw Thon

All our information about Daw Thon derives from Daw Pu Lay, her niece.

Daw Thon was born—I did not learn where—in about 1881. She was the daughter of U Tha Khar and his wife, Daw Khin Si. When she grew up, she married U Po Shwe Thee, who was (or became) headman of Boke Daung, a village in the area of Tatkon. Daw Thon and her husband were prosperous, and at one period she owned an elephant, which she hired out for work in logging.

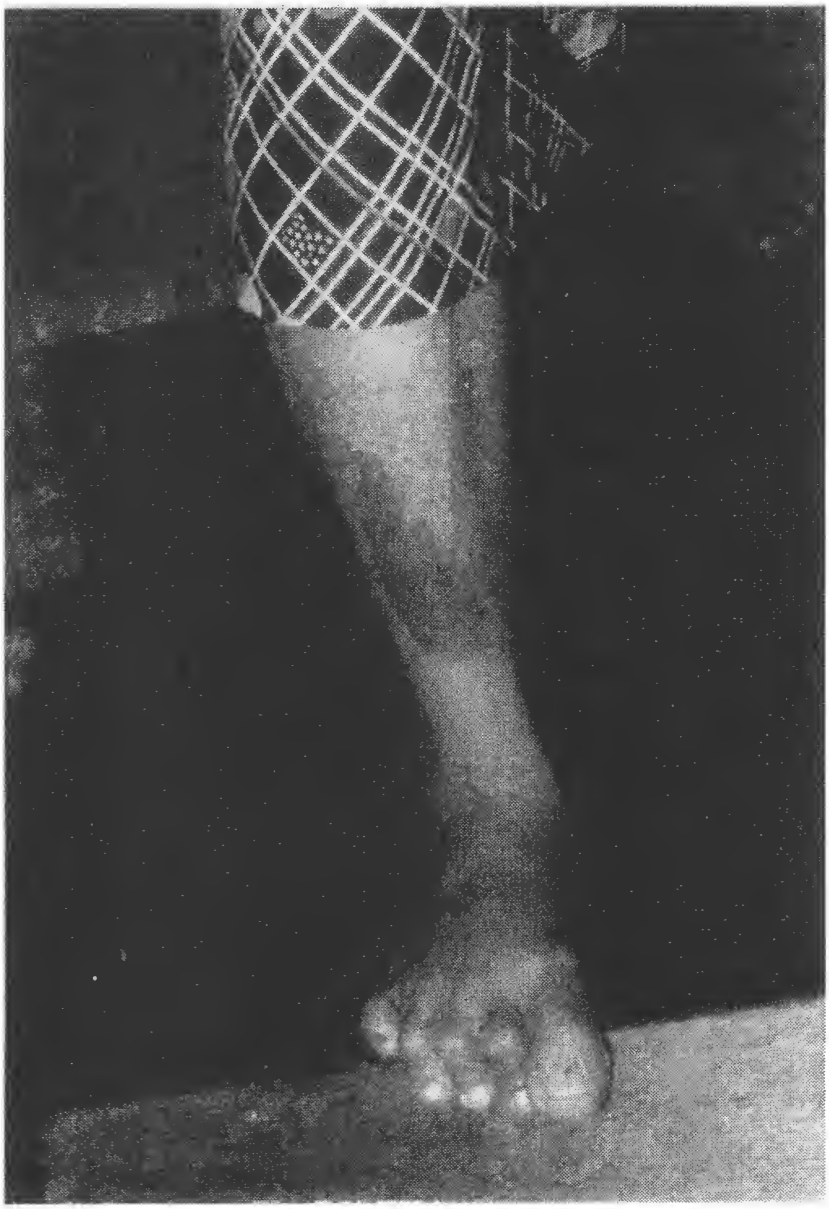

Figure 10-19 Birthmark on the anterior aspect of Daw Tin Yee's right leg as it appeared in November 1975, when she was 41½ years old. The birthmark was a large hyperpigmented macule. It was roughly triangular in shape and in its largest dimensions about 8 centimeters long and 3-4 centimeters wide.

Daw Thon and U Po Shwe Thee had two children, U Waing Ohn and Daw Pu. U Waing Ohn married Daw Phwa Shin, and it was she who marked the body of Daw Thon as she was dying. Daw Thon was particularly fond of her brother's daughter, Daw Pu Lay. Daw Pu and Daw Pu Lay were brought up together, and, later, Daw Thon and Daw Pu Lay used to visit each other for a month at a time.

When Daw Thon was about 47 years old, she died of an illness described to me no more precisely than as "water on the stomach." (I interpret these words to suggest ascites, of which the two most common causes are cirrhosis of the liver and heart failure; but it may have other causes.) Daw Thon died in Tatkon in 1928.

As Daw Thon was dying, her daughter-in-law, Daw Phwa Shin, took some soot from the bottom of a cooking pot and smeared it on Daw Thon's leg. She afterward told Daw Pu Lay she had done this, but did not say on which leg she had put the soot. She said that she was "nervous" as she was smearing the soot on her mother-in-law's leg; she felt that she was doing something strange and new.

Comment. I learned that residents of the Tatkon area believe that the person whose body is to be marked should be dying, but not actually dead, when the body is marked. (This belief about the suitable time for marking a body is far from universal even in Burma, let alone other countries, such as Thailand, where the postmortem marking of bodies is also widely practiced.) The marking—I am still describing the belief in the area of Tatkon—need not be accompanied by a special wish for the dying or deceased person to be reborn in the same family or same area. The marking is purely for purposes of identification if the person is reborn within range of those who made the marking or know about it.

I learned little about Daw Thon's character. She was "very pious" and gave generously for the building of pagodas and monasteries. She was also somewhat commanding in her manner and liked to have her own way.

A Claimed Intermediate Life

Daw Pu Lay said that there had been a short intermediate life as a water buffalo (in the same series of incarnations) between the death of Daw Thon and Daw Tin Yee's birth. This supposition of an intermediate life rested largely on two dreams had by an acquaintance who had died by the time we investigated this case.

An Announcing Dream

Daw Pu Lay said that about 1 month before she became pregnant with Daw Tin Yee she dreamed of Daw Thon, who asked whether she could stay with Daw Pu Lay and her husband.

Statements Made by Daw Tin Yee

When Daw Tin Yee was about 1½ years old, she said: "I am Daw Thon." Daw Pu Lay thought that Daw Tin Yee had made a few other statements about the previous life, but in 1975 she could not remember any of them. She said the identification of Daw Tin Yee as the reincarnation of Daw Thon derived from a combination of the announcing dream, the birthmark, and the few statements Daw Tin Yee had made.

Daw Tin Yee did not recognize any of Daw Thon's property. She did not ask to be taken to Daw Thon's village, and she never alluded to Daw Thon's death.

In 1975 Daw Tin Yee remembered nothing of the previous life. However, she thought that she had earlier had some memories that had faded.

Daw Tin Yee's Behavior

Daw Pu Lay said that she thought Daw Tin Yee resembled Daw Thon in having a somewhat superior attitude toward other persons and in wanting "to have the last word."

I did not learn whether Daw Tin Yee was pious, as Daw Thon had been.

Daw Tin Yee's Birthmark

Figure 10-19 shows that Daw Tin Yee's birthmark was a large hyperpigmented macule. Roughly triangular in shape, its widest dimensions were about 8 centimeters in length and 3-4 centimeters in width.

Daw Tin Yee said (in 1975): "When Daw Phwa Shin saw the mark on my leg, she said it was in the same place as the mark she had put on Daw Thon's leg." (I did not learn how old Daw Tin Yee then was.)

Both Daw Pu Lay and Daw Tin Yee said that no other member of the family had a similar birthmark.

Reasons Advanced for the Possible Rebirth of Daw Thon as Daw Pu Lay's Daughter

My readers are familiar with the curiosity that I have about why, if reincarnation occurs, a particular person may be reborn in one family instead of in any other. I sometimes ask informants to answer this question in relation to the case before us. For the present case, Daw Pu Lay gave three reasons. She did not attempt to appraise their merits, and they are not incompatible with each other.

First, if Daw Thon wished to be reborn in the same family (and she had said nothing before dying about wishing to do this), she had no choice but that of becoming a child of Daw Pu Lay. Her son had died (by the time Daw Thon died, or soon afterward), and her daughter, Daw Pu, was then unmarried.

Second, as I mentioned earlier, Daw Thon and Daw Pu Lay had been extremely close friends.

Third, Daw Pu Lay had asked Daw Thon to redeem a pawned gold ring for her. Daw Pu Lay was then living outside Tatkon, while (at that time) Daw Thon was living in the town. Daw Pu Lay had given Daw Thon the pawn ticket and the money for redeeming the ring about 7 months before Daw Thon died. Somehow, Daw Thon had not carried out this little commission before she died. Daw Pu Lay seemed to think that Daw Thon's failure in this matter might have weighed on her before and after she died and, by attaching her guiltily to Daw Pu Lay, become a factor drawing her back, in rebirth, to Daw Pu Lay.

Daw Tin Yee had never spoken about the matter of the unredeemed pawned gold ring to her mother.

Comment. To Western readers a lapse in doing a friend a favor may seem a small matter to determine an entire life as that person's daughter. However, there

are two points to be made in this connection. First, for a pious Buddhist, even a small debt incurs a serious obligation to pay the creditor—if not in this life, then in some future one. (The intermediate life passed as a water buffalo was said to have resulted from a peccadillo, by Western standards, of less magnitude than the matter of the unredeemed ring.) Second, assuming that the deceased and discarnate Daw Thon preserved a memory of her failed duty to her friend and wished to make amends, she would not necessarily have wished to be reborn as the friend's daughter in order to do this. The thought of the duty to the friend might have acted only as an attractive force between the two persons concerned in the transaction, one living and one dead. Rebirth would have been an incidental effect of the attraction.

In offering these comments I am trying to explain how these matters appear to Burmese Buddhists. I will add, however, that a few other cases support the belief that what we expect will happen to us after death does happen.

THE CASE OF MAUNG TIN TUN

Maung Tin Tun was born on August 31, 1961, in Kyidaungkan, Upper Burma. His parents were U Myint Thein and Daw Khin Nu, and he was their second child. He had an older sister. U Myint Thein worked as a casual laborer on farms. He died in about 1968.

When Maung Tin Tun was born, he had a prominent birthmark on the nape of his neck (Figure 10-20). However, at that time this birthmark had no significance for his parents; there had been no announcing dream before his birth.

When Maung Tin Tun became able to speak (at the age of about 2), he talked about "my husband and children." Asked who he was, he replied: "Ma Htun. My husband's name is U Hla Maung. He sells [just what Maung Tin Tun did not say] near the railway station at Thazi. Take me there." He said that Ma Htun had had three children, but did not give their names. He also said that he had a herd of cows and a good house that was to the west of the railway station at Thazi. He remembered having gold bangles, gold rings, and a gold necklace, which he wished to ask U Hla Maung to give him so that he could give them to his mother, Daw Khin Nu.

Maung Tin Tun further said that when he was dying (as Ma Htun in the previous life), U Hla Maung marked the nape of Ma Htun's neck with grease from a cooking pot. (In Burma the underside of a cooking pot would have black soot, mixed with grease, from the wood fire usually used for cooking.)

Maung Tin Tun frequently asked his parents to take him to Thazi and assured them that he could find his previous house near the railway station. However, U Myint Thein and Daw Khin Nu never tried to find an U Hla Maung who traded near the Thazi Railway Station. They said that they were afraid that if they found the right person and Maung Tin Tun asked for his wife's gold jewelry, U Hla Maung might unjustly think they wanted the property for themselves. They were also inhibited from traveling to Thazi because U Myint Thein had deserted from the Burmese

Figure 10-20 Birthmark on the back of Maung Tin Tun's neck as it appeared in April 1978, when he was 17 years old. The birthmark was a roundish hyperpigmented macule approximately 3-4 centimeters in diameter.

Army during the period of insurgency (see Appendix B); he was subsequently pardoned, but the police monitored his movements away from Kyidaungkan.

U Win Maung learned of this case from U Kyaw Hlaing, one of his friends and informants of Okshitgone village in Tatkon Township. On November 18, 1978, he met Daw Khin Nu and interviewed her. He also photographed Maung Tin Tun's birthmark. (I have not myself met Maung Tin Tun or his mother.)

At my request, Daw Hnin Aye went to Kyidaungkan in June 1988 and had a second interview with Daw Khin Nu. She obtained answers to several questions I had asked her to put to Daw Khin Nu. Daw Hnin Aye obtained some additional information about Maung Tin Tun's statements, and I have conflated her report

with U Win Maung's in my account above of what Maung Tin Tun claimed to remember about the previous life. (Except for the number of children remembered—two or three—the two accounts of the statements overlapped and supplemented each other; they were not contradictory.)

Maung Tin Tun's Behavior Related to the Previous Life

Circumstances and Manner of Maung Tin Tun's Speaking about the Previous Life. Like many Burmese subjects of these cases, Maung Tin Tun spoke most about the previous life on rainy days. He frequently cried to be taken to Thazi.

When Maung Tin Tun was about 5 years old, he had a bad fall from a height and was unconscious for 4 or 5 hours. After that he never talked again of the previous life.

Maung Tin Tun's Feminine Behavior. When Maung Tin Tun was between 2 and 3 years old, he put *thanaka* (a cosmetic paste) on his face. He liked to wear his sister's longyi, and after putting on her clothes he would sometimes dance.

Comment. Thanaka is sometimes applied to the faces of boys, because it protects the skin from excessive sunlight. However, spontaneous application of thanaka to the face by a young child is regarded as a feminine trait.

Possible Geographic Factors in This Case

Kyidaungkan is a small town on the main line railway between Rangoon and Mandalay. It is approximately 20 kilometers north of Pyinmana. Thazi is an important railway junction (although only a small town), also on the main railway line between Rangoon and Mandalay. It is about 115 kilometers north of Kyidaungkan.

Maung Tin Tun's family had no connections with Thazi, but Daw Khin Nu happened to pass through it during the year when she became pregnant with Maung Tin Tun.

Maung Tin Tun's Birthmark

Figure 10-20 shows that Maung Tin Tun's birthmark was a prominent flat hyperpigmented macule on the right side of the back of his neck. It was dark brown, almost black in color, approximately round in shape, and about 3-4 centimeters in diameter. (The photograph was taken when Maung Tin Tun was 17 years old.)

Maung Tin Tun's Later Development

In 1978 Maung Tin Tun joined the army and was still in it in 1988. In May 1988 he married.

Comment on the Possibility of Verifying This Case

Daw Khin Nu told Daw Hnin Aye (in 1988) that she had somehow estimated—perhaps from the number of children Maung Tin Tun claimed to have had in the previous life—that the Ma Htun whose life he claimed to remember would have been in her early 30s when she died. If so, her husband would probably have been about the same age or a little older. If we allow for an interval of several years between the death of Ma Htun and Maung Tin Tun's birth, we could estimate that in 1995 U Hla Maung of Thazi, if he existed and is still alive, would be about 65-70 years old. He may still be traced.

THE CASE OF MA MYAT MYAT HTWE

Summary of the Case and Its Investigation

Ma Myat Myat Htwe was born in Tatkon, Upper Burma, on November 18, 1971. She was the fourth daughter (and fourth child) of her parents, U Kyi Myint and his wife, Daw Khin Tint. They subsequently had another daughter. U Kyi Myint was a welder owning his own shop for welding in the town of Tatkon. They lived in modest economic circumstances, but were not poor.

Ma Myat Myat Htwe began to speak clearly at about the age of 2 and almost immediately started making references to a previous life. She remembered the life of a man, but could not state his name or where he had died. However, she described an automobile accident in which he had been badly injured and then taken to a hospital. She remembered regaining consciousness in the hospital, just as the injured man's father was marking his right upper arm with charcoal. As Ma Myat Myat Htwe described the marking, she pointed to a large birthmark on her own right upper arm (Figure 10-21). Ma Myat Myat Htwe made a number of other statements about the previous life, but never gave information that was specific enough to permit tracing anyone corresponding to her statements.

She also showed masculine behavior appropriate for her claim to have been a man in the previous life and some other unusual behavior that seemed to be related to it.

U Win Maung and I learned of this case in November 1975. Our informant was Maung Nyunt, who was the subject of a case himself (included in Chapter 8 of this work.) As we happened to be in Tatkon at the time, we went almost immediately to Ma Myat Myat Htwe's home, where we met her and her parents, who are our only informants for the case.

In 1980, when we were back in Tatkon, we visited the family again, in the hope that Ma Myat Myat Htwe might have made some additional statements permitting the tracing of someone corresponding to the life she claimed to remember. Unfortunately, she had not.

Figure 10-21 Birthmark on the right upper arm of Ma Myat Myat Htwe as it appeared in November 1975, when she was 4 years old. The birthmark was a hyperpigmented macule measuring about 4 centimeters long and 2 centimeters wide.

In 1981 U Win Maung examined and photographed Ma Myat Myat Htwe's principal birthmark again.

An Announcing Dream

When Daw Khin Tint was 3 or 4 months pregnant with Ma Myat Myat Htwe, she went on a pilgrimage to the Myat Saw Nyi Naung Pagoda in Toungoo.

She dreamed that a man dressed in white[30] told her he was going to come and stay with her.

Ma Myat Myat Htwe's Statements

Ma Myat Myat Htwe said that she had a wife called Ma Nan Thu and two children. Ma Nan Thu lived in Rangoon, but Ma Myat Myat Htwe gave no address for her. She said that she owned a small sedan car and knew how to drive a car. An older man of her family, to whom she at first referred as "Ba Gyi" (a term that means "older man" and is usually applied to a paternal grandfather) had once sold an automobile for 2,500 kyats. The "Ba Gyi's" name was U Po Kun.

Ma Myat Myat Htwe said that she had been killed in an automobile accident in Rangoon. Some boulders had been placed across the road, evidently with a view to blocking it and stopping automobiles. The car overturned and caught fire. At this point the man whose life she recalled apparently lost consciousness. Ma Myat Myat Htwe's next memory was of becoming conscious again in a hospital where there were nurses. She recalled the sound of someone grinding charcoal and then that Ba Gyi applied it to the underside of the right arm (where Ma Myat Myat Htwe had her birthmark). To apply the charcoal Ba Gyi used a brush of the kind with which cosmetic paste (thanaka) is applied to the faces of women and children in Burma.

Daw Khin Tint once asked Ma Myat Myat Htwe how she came to be born in their family. She said that she had seen her mother in Toungoo and followed her home from there. (It will be recalled that Daw Khin Tint was already pregnant when she went to Toungoo and had the dream I have described.)

Ma Myat Myat Htwe made a small number of other remarks about the previous life. She said that Ba Gyi had plenty of gold and that she herself had plenty of money. She declared the toilet in her (present) family's house to be "no good" and added: "We used to have a better one than that." She also said: "I used to have a thick, cozy mattress" (to sleep on). She said that she had married Ma Nan Thu because of love (that is, the marriage was not arranged).

One day Ma Myat Myat Htwe saw some hospital nurses. (I think they must have been in a street.) She recognized them as nurses and spoke about what they do in a hospital.

Comment. Ma Myat Myat Htwe's parents considered her comment about what nurses do to be outside her normal knowledge and derived from her memories of the previous life.

Boulders might be placed across a road by dacoits intending to stop motorists and rob them. However, they would be unlikely to do this in or near

[30]White is the traditional color of dress for the devout (Theravadin) Buddhist layman. The white clothing of the man in the dream would be indicative of piety, not necessarily of saintliness. I have given elsewhere some further information about the significance of persons dressed in white for Theravadin Buddhists (Stevenson, 1983a, especially pp. 6-7).

Rangoon. Toungoo, in Upper Burma, is a much smaller city than Rangoon, and the roads around it would be much more suitable for the kind of highway robbery suggested by the detail of boulders placed across the road. However, if the accident and death occurred at Toungoo, we have no explanation for why Ma Myat Myat Htwe said that it had happened at Rangoon. (Is it possible that her parents misunderstood and that she had been trying to say that she was *returning to* Rangoon at the time of the accident?) If the accident did occur at Toungoo, then Daw Khin Tint's dream at Toungoo and Ma Myat Myat Htwe's later statement that she followed her mother home from Toungoo fall into place in our attempt to make sense of her statements.

The figure mentioned for the price of an automobile that Ba Gyi sold—2,500 kyats—was extremely small for an automobile in the 1970s. (It would be the equivalent of about $400.00.) Such a cheap automobile would be incompatible with the life of a well-to-do person, such as that Ma Myat Myat Htwe seemed to be remembering. The difficulty suggested might be resolved by assigning the life in question to a period 20 or 30 years earlier, when automobiles were less expensive or, more accurately, could be purchased for fewer kyats.

Ma Myat Myat Htwe's Behavior Related to the Previous Life

Circumstances and Manner of Ma Myat Myat Htwe's Speaking about the Previous Life. As have many Burmese subjects, Ma Myat Myat Htwe spoke about the previous life for the first time on a cloudy day. Also, as often with other subjects (of all countries), many of her remarks about the previous life were stimulated by seeing a person (for example, the nurses on the street) or an object (for example, the family's toilet) that reminded her of something similar in the previous life.

When Ma Myat Myat Htwe was scolded, she would threaten to leave and "go back home." She was sure she would be welcomed there and said that if they would find Ba Gyi and show him the birthmark on her right arm he would give them all the wealth that Ma Myat Myat Htwe claimed to have had in the previous life.

Ma Myat Myat Htwe's Masculine Behavior. Ma Myat Myat Htwe showed several masculine traits. She liked to wear boys' clothes and usually did wear them. She had gone to a tailor's shop more than once and asked for boys' clothes. Her mother thought that her manner of talking was somewhat masculine. Her mother also noticed that when Ma Myat Myat Htwe quarreled, she would kick her adversary with her feet and use the side of her straightened hand in making a blow like a karate fighter. Her father said that she played like a boy.

Ma Myat Myat Htwe's Attitude of Superiority. I have already mentioned Ma Myat Myat Htwe's occasional invidious comparisons between her home and that of the previous life and her mention of wealth in the previous family. Her fondness for good food harmonized with the prosperous life she remembered.

Ma Myat Myat Htwe showed an adult attitude toward her parents. She addressed them somewhat rudely. She did not even call them by their names, let

alone by words for mother and father. She used instead the pronoun for "you," but in the form of the Burmese language used toward inferiors.

Ma Myat Myat Htwe's Interest in Religion. Ma Myat Myat Htwe was notably religious, and her mother found that if she, at the end of a long, tiring day, went to sleep without worshiping, Ma Myat Myat Htwe would wake her up and remind her that she should worship before going to sleep.

Her assumption of being prosperous and her religiosity were both expressed in a conversation she once had with her father. She asked him when he was going to buy an automobile. He said that he could not afford to buy one. Ma Myat Myat Htwe said: "Oh, I have plenty of money." U Kyi Myint then asked her what she would do with an automobile if she got one. She said: "I will go all around Burma on a pilgrimage to worship at pagodas." (I think this exchange included some of Ma Myat Myat Htwe's first references to the previous life.)

Ma Myat Myat Htwe's Behavior in a Motor Vehicle. Ma Myat Myat Htwe said that she could drive a car. Once she was put in the driver's seat of a Jeep and asked whether she could drive it. She said that she could and then showed how it could be turned to right and left. (As she was less than 5 years old at this time, she presumably did no more than indicate how the steering wheel should be turned to change the direction of the vehicle.)

Comment. Some knowledge of motor vehicles would be commonplace in a young child living in a country of the West. However, motor vehicles were still unusual in Tatkon in the 1970s. Most people in the town moved about on foot, by bicycle, or in pony-carts. Outside the town bullock-carts and bicycles would be used for longer journeys. Buses connected the town with others, and there were a few vehicles used by the police and government officials. However, a child such as Ma Myat Myat Htwe would rarely have had a chance to learn about private automobiles.

Ma Myat Myat Htwe's Birthmarks

Figure 10-21 shows the large birthmark on the under surface of Ma Myat Myat Htwe's right arm as it appeared in November 1975, when she was 4 years old. It was a hyperpigmented macule, dark brown in color. It was about 4 centimeters long and 2 centimeters wide. Figure 10-22 shows the birthmark on Ma Myat Myat Htwe's right upper arm as it appeared in 1981, when she was about 10 years old. The birthmark had not faded, and it appeared to have increased in length, although not in width, since 1975. Furthermore, it had evolved into a slightly elevated, hairy melanocytic nevus.

No other member of her family or of either of her parents' families had a similar birthmark. In fact, none had any birthmark whatever, apart from a nephew of Daw Khin Tint, who had a small birthmark on the chin.

Ma Myat Myat Htwe had two other birthmarks that I examined, sketched, and photographed. One was a flat hyperpigmented macule, light brown in color, on the back of her right thigh, near the buttock (Figure 10-23).The other was a

Figure 10-22 Birthmark on the right upper arm of Ma Myat Myat Htwe as it appeared in 1981, when she was about 10 years old. The birthmark had not faded since 1975. It had become somewhat longer, but not wider than it had been earlier. The birthmark had by this time evolved into a slightly elevated melanocytic hairy nevus.

hairless hyperpigmented area looking like a small scar; it was located at the top of the head toward the back. It was generally round in shape and about 5 millimeters in diameter (Figure 10-24).

Comment. Ma Myat Myat Htwe had made no reference to these other birthmarks. (The one on her right upper arm was the only one to which she had drawn attention.) Her parents inferred that the other two birthmarks perhaps corresponded to wounds received during the fatal automobile accident that Ma Myat Myat Htwe described. Looked at in this way the birthmark at the top of the head suggests that the previous personality was thrown out of the car at the time of the

Figure 10-23 Birthmark on the right upper thigh of Ma Myat Myat Htwe as it appeared in November 1975. The birthmark was an irregularly shaped hyperpigmented macule.

accident and that his head hit the ground first. A somewhat similar birthmark on the head, related to a similar accident, occurred in the case of Wilfred Meares (Figure 6-30). The person whose life Wilfred remembered had landed on his head when he was ejected from an automobile at the time it crashed. Wilfred Meares's birthmark was not hyperpigmented. Two other birthmarks corresponding to blows on the head (one presumed, one verified) were, however, hyperpigmented. These were those of Nirankar Bhatnagar (Figure 4-23) and Sunita Khandelwal (Figure 6-28).

Further Information Obtained in 1980

In 1980 U Win Maung and I had an exceedingly brief meeting with Ma Myat Myat Htwe's family. In 1975 her parents had not been clear about whether U Po Kun

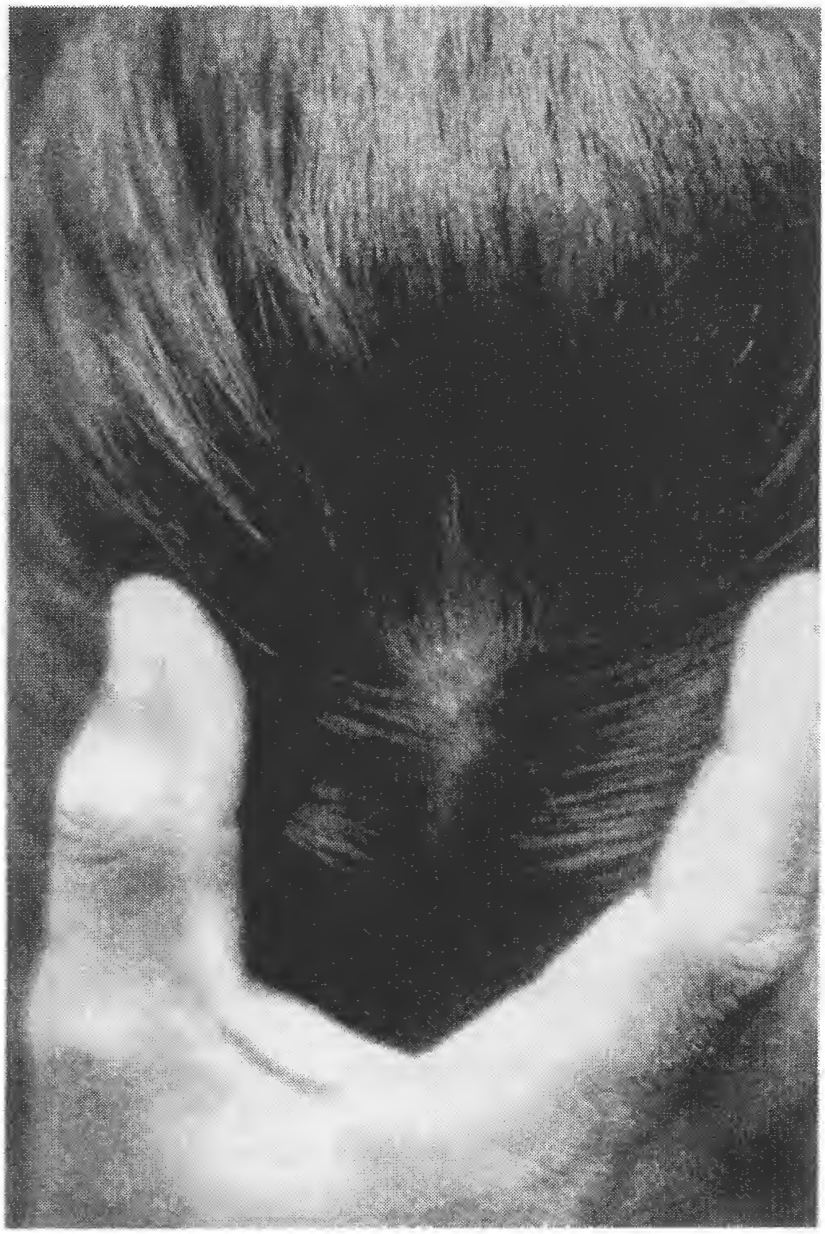

Figure 10-24 Birthmark at the top of Ma Myat Myat Htwe's head as it appeared in November 1975. The birthmark was a roundish, scarlike area of hyperpigmentation about 5 millimeters in diameter.

was the previous personality's father or grandfather. The term "Ba Gyi" that Ma Myat Myat Htwe used for him is, as I mentioned, usually applied to a paternal grandfather. However, in the 5 years between our visits U Kyi Myint and Daw Khin Tint had learned from Ma Myat Myat Htwe (or had themselves concluded) that U Po Kun had been the father (not the grandfather) of the man whose life Ma Myat Myat Htwe recalled. They also learned from her that he (U Po Kun) had been a major in the Burmese Army, not necessarily at the time of the previous personality's death.

Figure 10-25 Birthmark on medial aspect of U Myat Htun's right arm as it appeared in November 1978, when he was 40½ years old. The birthmark was a large hyperpigmented macule, roughly rectangular in shape and measuring approximately 6 centimeters by 3 centimeters.

THE CASE OF U MYAT HTUN

Summary of the Case and Its Investigation

U Myat Htun was born in Kyidaungkan, Upper Burma, in April 1938. He was the youngest child of U Yin Nge and his wife, Daw Saw May. He had six older siblings.

Immediately after U Myat Htun's birth, he was found to have a birthmark (Figure 10-25) that was identified as corresponding with a mark that had been made on the body of U Yin Nge's father, U Htun, after he had died. On the strength of this correspondence and an announcing dream, U Myat Htun was identified as the reincarnation of U Htun.

After he became able to speak, U Myat Htun made a few statements about the life of U Htun; and he showed unusual behavior that accorded with his idea that he was an elder of the family and due proper respect from juniors.

U Win Maung learned about this case from one of his informants in Okshitgone village, near Tatkon. He made a preliminary investigation of the case in November 1978, when (at Kyidaungkan) he met and photographed U Myat Htun and the birthmark. His principal informants were Daw Saw May (U Myat Htun's mother) and Daw Khin Myint (U Myat Htun's sister, older by about 8 years).

After reading U Win Maung's report, I wished that we could obtain more information about the case. Accordingly, I asked Daw Hnin Aye to return to Kyidaungkan and make further enquiries along the lines of questions that I sent to her. She was able to do this in June 1988. She interviewed Daw Khin Myint again and obtained a small amount of additional information from Daw Kyi, a sister-in-law of U Htun.

I myself have not met U Myat Htun or any of the other informants for the case.

Unfortunately, in 1978 U Myat Htun had to catch a train soon after U Win Maung reached his home, and in 1988 he was away at his place of work (far to the south) when Daw Hnin Aye went to Kyidaungkan. Thus we have almost no information directly from U Myat Htun.

The Life, Death, and Marking of U Htun

U Htun was a farmer who lived and died at Kyidaungkan. He married Daw Pan, and they had eight children, of whom U Yin Nge was the youngest. He lived to an advanced age and became partly blind. Daw Khin Myint thought that he was around 75-77 years old when he died, probably in about 1931-1932, but perhaps a year or so later.

On an extremely cold night U Htun and members of his family built a large fire in the house, wrapped themselves in blankets, and went to sleep. Most of them were lying on the floor, but U Htun was sitting up. During the night he must have fallen forward into the fire, and his chest was burned. However, he was already dead when family members found him at about 4 a.m.[31] (It is probable that he died in his sleep, and his body then slumped forward into the fire. If he had been living when his body went into the fire, the intense heat would have awakened him; he would then have awakened the other persons in the room, and his life would have been saved.)

U Htun's young granddaughter, Daw Aye Nyo, had heard her elders say that if one marked a dead person the mark would appear on the person's next body. So she decided to mark U Htun's body in order to test the truth of this belief. (She was also curious to learn whether U Htun would be reborn as a human being

[31]I have given here the account of U Htun's death that Daw Khin Myint gave Daw Hnin Aye in 1988. It differs from the one U Win Maung obtained in 1978. However, his account was, as he said in his notes, pieced together from contributions of different informants. The important difference in his account was the belief that U Htun had lived for 5 days after being burned, instead of being found dead lying in the fire.

I became interested in this detail when I learned that U Myat Htun had no birthmarks corresponding to the burns on U Htun's chest.

It is important to emphasize that, although I have accepted Daw Khin Myint's (1988) account, it too must be noted as secondhand. If she was 8 when U Myat Htun was born, she could not have been more than 4 or 5 when U Htun died.

The dates for such major events as the year of U Htun's death and U Myat Htun's birth differed by as much as 5 years in the two accounts. I have adopted the chronology developed from U Win Maung's interviews which took place in 1978, when the informants were 10 years closer to the events they were remembering than they were in 1988, when Daw Hnin Aye met her two informants.

instead of as an animal.) Daw Aye Nyo used black grease from a cooking pot to make the mark on the right arm of U Htun's body.

A few years later, Daw Aye Nyo learned that U Yin Nge had dreamed that his father was going to be reborn in his family. So when U Myat Htun was born, she went to U Yin Nge's home to examine the newborn baby. She looked for and found a "black mark" at the site where she had marked U Htun. She called Daw Khin Myint and told her and others that U Myat Htun's birthmark was at exactly the place where she had marked her grandfather.

Daw Khin Myint was our informant about the marking of U Htun and also about Daw Aye Nyo's later saying that the birthmark was at the site of the marking. (Daw Aye Nyo had died by 1978.) Therefore our information about the marking is secondhand.

An Announcing Dream

Before Daw Saw May became pregnant with U Myat Htun, U Yin Nge dreamed that he saw his father coming toward him and his wife "with good eyes." He interpreted the dream to mean that his father was going to be reborn as their child.

Statements and a Recognition Made by U Myat Htun

When Daw Khin Myint was about 10 years old and U Myat Htun about 2, she was bathing him and made repeated efforts to remove what she thought was a tenacious smudge of dirt on her brother's arm. Maung (as he then was) Myat Htun said to her: "Don't do that, child. Aye Nyo made that mark."

U Myat Htun said that he was U Htun; but he seems to have made few other statements about the previous life.

When he was about 2 years old, U Myat Htun recognized one of U Htun's daughters whom he had not seen before. This woman, Daw Hla Mai, had been away from Kyidaungkan and one day returned to the village. On seeing her, the young Maung Myat Htun spontaneously said: "Hla Mai has returned." When Daw Hla Mai heard him say this, she burst into tears.

Comment. Daw Khin Myint told U Win Maung in 1978 about the episode of trying to wash the birthmark off her brother's arm. She told Daw Hnin Aye in 1988 that Daw Aye Nyo had called her to see the mark on the baby's arm just after he was born. We have to suppose, therefore, that during the approximately 2 years after the baby's birth she had forgotten about his birthmark. As she was only a young girl of about 8 when her brother was born, the birthmark may not then have had the meaning for her that it later came to have.

U Myat Htun's Behavior Related to the Previous Life

In Burma it is customary for children to pay respects ceremonially to their parents during the period of the Buddhist Lent. When Maung Myat Htun was a

child, he would not do this. On the contrary, when his older brothers and sisters paid respects to their parents, he asked them to pay respects to him also. He did not use honorifics in addressing members of the family.

U Myat Htun's Birthmark

Figure 10-25 shows the birthmark on the medial aspect of U Myat Htun's right elbow. It was a large hyperpigmented macule, roughly rectangular in shape and measuring about 6 centimeters by 3 centimeters. (I have made these estimates from the photograph that U Win Maung took.)

Other Relevant Medical Information

U Myat Htun had no birthmarks corresponding to the burns on U Htun's chest that occurred when he (or his dead body) fell into the fire. His eyesight was normal and at least good enough for him to train and work as a construction engineer.

Later Development of U Myat Htun

The young Maung Myat Htun's brothers and sisters laughed at him over his pretensions of superiority. He therefore stopped speaking about the previous life, but I do not know at what age he did this. In 1978 he told U Win Maung that he still preserved faint memories of the previous life.

He did not conform in the matter of paying proper respect to his parents until he was 18 years old.

THE CASE OF MA SANDA WIN

Summary of the Case and Its Investigation

Ma Sanda Win was born in Mandalay, Burma, on May 24, 1953. Her parents were U Win Htun and his wife, Daw Khin Mya. She was the first daughter and third child of her parents. Later, another son and another daughter were born in the family. U Win Htun was on the staff of the United States Embassy in Rangoon for many years.

Ma Sanda Win was born with a birthmark on the dorsal surface of her right wrist (Figure 10-26). This was at the location of a mark made with charcoal on the dead body of her older brother. He had not been named when he died at the age of 7 months, and so I shall call him Baby Maung.

I first learned of this case in November 1970, during my first visit to Burma. My informant was U Tin Tut, who was then also on the staff of the United States Embassy in Rangoon, where U Win Htun was his assistant. I made half a page of notes of what U Tin Tut told me about the case, but did not study it further for some years.

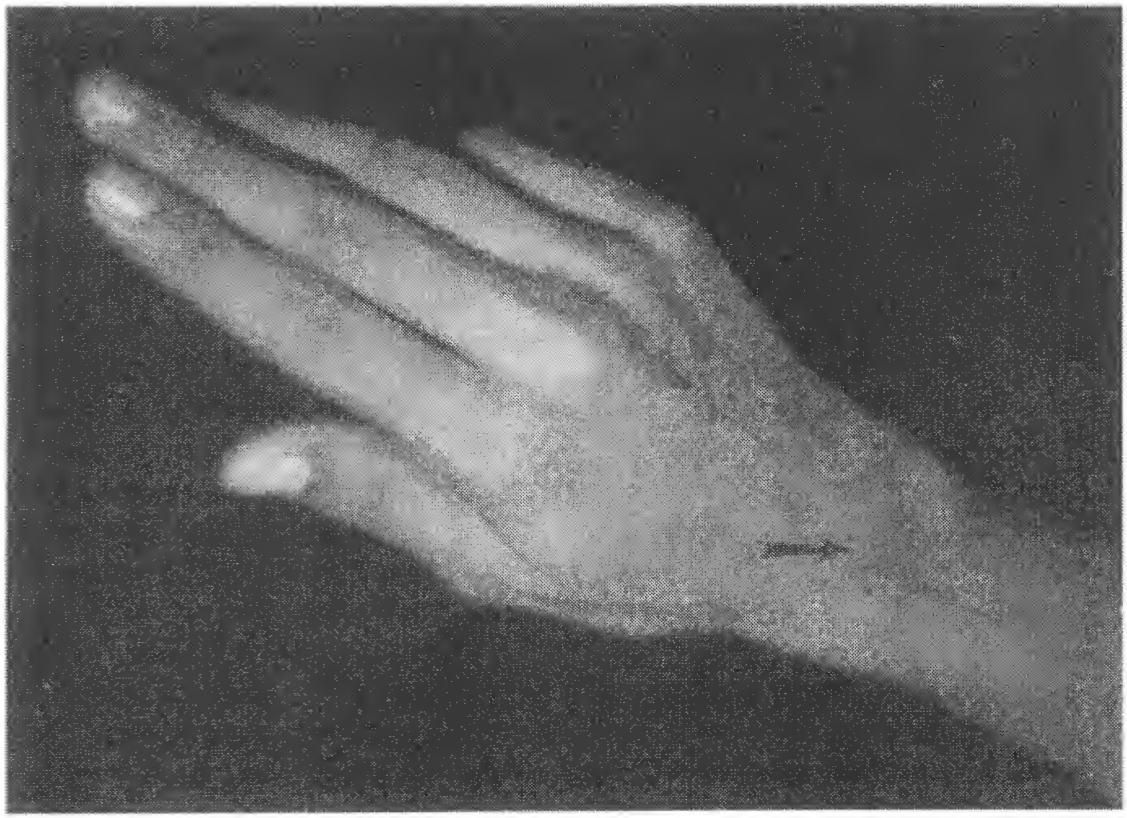

Figure 10-26 Birthmark on the dorsal aspect of Ma Sanda Win's right wrist as it appeared in March 1975, when she was almost 22 years old. The birthmark was a hyperpigmented macule, ovoid in shape, and approximately 2 centimeters long and 1 centimeter wide.

On March 19, 1975, U Win Maung met Ma Sanda Win and her mother, Daw Khin Mya, at their home in Rangoon. He recorded a full statement from Daw Khin Mya. About 6 months later, on November 11, 1975, U Win Maung and I visited the family together and this time also met Ma Sanda Win's father, U Win Htun.

Daw Khin Mya had witnessed the marking of Baby Maung's body by a relative of the family, Maung Aung Tha. We thought it would be helpful to obtain his testimony on the matter also, and so U Win Maung wrote to him and received a written statement.

In 1984 U Win Maung and I met the family again. In the meantime, Daw Khin Mya had died and was thought to have reincarnated as the daughter of her younger daughter, Ma Omar. (This baby was Ma Khin Sandi, whose case I report in Chapter 7 of this work.) We obtained some additional information about Ma Sanda Win's case in 1984.

The Marking of Baby Maung

I believe that Daw Khin Mya remembered Ma Sanda Win's birthdate precisely: May 24, 1953. However, we had to estimate the dates of Baby Maung's birth and

death from Daw Khin Mya's statements that he had been 7 months old when he died and that she had conceived Ma Sanda Win 2 months after his death. Allowing for a 9 months' pregnancy, we reach an approximate date for Baby Maung's birth at the end of November 1951 and for his death at the end of June 1952.

Baby Maung was ill for 2 months before he died. He suffered from constipation, and his lungs seemed to be congested. We did not learn any precise medical diagnosis of the cause of his death.

When Baby Maung died, an old lady of the family, Daw Hla Yee (who was Daw Khin Mya's great-aunt), said that "the baby would go nowhere else. It will return to its mother because it was sucking her milk at the time of its death." This remark stimulated Daw Khin Mya to have Baby Maung marked so that he could be recognized when he was reborn. She therefore asked one of her husband's nephews, Maung Aung Tha, to do this for her. Maung Aung Tha ground up a piece of wood charcoal with some water on a slate and smeared it on the right wrist of Baby Maung with his forefinger. Daw Khin Mya watched him do this and remarked at the time that the ensuing birthmark would be ugly because he was making too big a mark.

U Win Htun was away from home at the time and was not a witness of the marking of Baby Maung.

As I mentioned, U Win Maung requested a statement from Maung Aung Tha about the marking of Baby Maung. Maung Aung Tha was then living in Pakokku. His letter (written in October 1975) stated:

> It is true that I myself marked the son of [my] uncle and aunt on the arm, when he was about to die. However, after more than 25 years, I do not remember whether it was the left hand or right hand.

Comment. This letter was written in Burmese, and U Win Maung, who translated it for me, commented that Maung Aung Tha had used the words *let-moung*, which may mean "arm," but is generally used to indicate the upper arm, above the elbow. The forearm is indicated by *let* alone. Maung Aung Tha also said he put the mark on Baby Maung when he was about to die. Daw Khin Mya said that Baby Maung had actually died when his body was marked. In sum, three details of the marking that Daw Khin Mya remembered were not concordantly recalled by Maung Aung Tha. The important fact, however, was corroborated. This was that Maung Aung Tha had marked Baby Maung on an arm about the time the baby died.

An Apparent Mediumistic Communication from Baby Maung

A week or so after Baby Maung's death, U Win Htun and Daw Khin Mya consulted a monk about a business matter completely unrelated to the baby's death. The monk was credited with paranormal powers. They had never met him before.

In their interview with the monk about the main business on their minds, Baby Maung's parents had not mentioned their dead baby. Nevertheless, the monk

spontaneously began to talk about the dead boy and to give what seemed to be a communication from him. He said that Baby Maung had been the reincarnation of one of Daw Khin Mya's relatives on her father's side. This man had been a monk. He predicted that the baby boy would be reborn to Daw Khin Mya as a girl, who would live a long and healthy life. The monk also said the dead baby asked Daw Khin Mya not to weep on his account because this gave him great discomfort. Finally, the communicating boy asked that Daw Khin Mya save two of Baby Maung's shirts that he was wearing during his illness; he said he would like to wear them again.

This communication heightened the family's expectation that Baby Maung would be reborn in the family, and Daw Khin Mya said that "when Ma Sanda Win was born, the first thing we looked for was the birthmark on the right wrist."

Comment. I have included an account of the communication given by the monk because it appears to have strengthened Daw Khin Mya's expectation and hope that Baby Maung would be reborn as her child, complete with a birthmark at the place where Baby Maung had been marked. She was a witness of the marking on Baby Maung's wrist, and this is therefore not a case in which we can exclude the interpretation of a maternal impression as the cause of Ma Sanda Win's birthmark.

Whether the communication contained evidence of a paranormal process, let alone of the survival of Baby Maung after death, we cannot say. Although U Win Htun and Daw Khin Mya did not speak about Baby Maung's death, perhaps they were still showing some signs of grief over that loss; the baby had died only a week or so before their meeting with the monk. If the monk did not infer that the couple had recently lost a member of the family, then the communication gave evidence, minimally, of telepathy on his part.

It may be argued that a baby of 7 months that had not yet learned to speak could not possibly produce a communication in words. I agree with that, but I think that paranormal communications have little or nothing to do with words. They occur mainly in images, and the medium or sensitive who perceives the images communicated then finds the best words he or she can with which to express the communication.

Ma Sanda Win's Birthmark

Figure 10-26 shows that Ma Sanda Win had a hyperpigmented macule on the dorsum of her right wrist. It was ovoid in shape and approximately 2 centimeters long and 1 centimeter wide.

Daw Khin Mya said that when Ma Sanda Win was born, the birthmark had extended all across the back of the wrist. By 1975 it had become appreciably smaller in relation to the surrounding tissues.

Other Relevant Medical Information. Ma Sanda Win had no macule on her left wrist. U Win Htun said that so far as he knew no other member of the family had a birthmark similar to Ma Sanda Win's. I examined his wrists and also

those of Ma Omar, Ma Sanda Win's younger sister, and neither of them had a nevus at the site of Ma Sanda Win's.

Ma Omar's daughter, Ma Khin Sandi, had a small flat pigmented nevus on the back of her *left* wrist, but that corresponded to a mark made on the wrist of Daw Khin Mya after she died. (I have given further particulars about Ma Khin Sandi in the report of her case.)

Other Information

Ma Sanda Win has had good health. In 1986, when I last met her, she was married and also working as a teacher in Rangoon. She had never had any imaged memories of a previous life. She said that she would prefer life as a male.

U Win Htun said that after the birth of their first son, Maung Myo Thein (who was born before Baby Maung and who survived infancy), he was indifferent about the sexes of later babies that he and his wife might have. He would have been equally happy to have had either a boy or a girl.

THE CASE OF ANURAK SITHIPAN

Introduction

This is one of several cases that have convinced me that cases potentially available for study are much more numerous—by how much we cannot say—than those we have investigated. In February 1977, the late Professor Kloom Vajropala and I went to an area beyond Paknam (south of Bangkok, Thailand) in search of an informant for the case of Ornuma Sua Ying Yong. I suggested to Professor Kloom that while we were there we might just enquire about other cases that I was sure could be found in almost any village of Thailand. Professor Kloom was—even among Thais—an extremely polite person, but he could not prevent himself from expressing an almost scoffing disbelief that one could just go into a village in Thailand and find a case by asking for it. Nevertheless, to humor me he agreed that we should try. We walked into the village of Laemphapa, installed ourselves in a small boutique, and ordered something or other to justify our presence. Then we said that we were interested in children who seemed to remember previous lives. Within a few minutes a 14-year-old youth, Piwatana Sithipan, came forward and said that his younger brother Anurak was such a child. We paid our bill and immediately moved to the Sithipan house, which was about 100 meters from where we were.

Summary of the Case and Its Investigation

Anurak Sithipan was born in Bangkok on December 14, 1969. (He was delivered by caesarean operation.) His parents were Chamnong Sithipan and his wife,

Figure 10-27 Birthmark on the posterior surface of Anurak's elbow as it appeared in March 1978, when he was 8 years old. The birthmark was an extensive hyperpigmented macule, irregularly shaped, with dimensions of approximately 5 centimeters wide and 5 centimeters long. The center was almost black.
The photograph also shows a small pigmented nevus on Anurak's forearm; this has no supposed connection with a previous life.

Wandhana. Anurak was their eighth and last living child. Chamnong and his family lived with his father-in-law, Champa (Wandhana's father), and together they engaged in shrimp fishing and in the conduct of a retail oil business. They supplied fuel for the numerous small boats that travel along the klongs (canals) of that region.

When Anurak was born, he was found to have a prominent birthmark on the posterior aspect of his right elbow (Figure 10-27), and this corresponded to a mark

that had been made near the same place on the right elbow of his older brother Chatchewan, who had drowned in the klong behind the family house in early 1967.

Anurak began to speak when he was about 1 year old. Between the ages of 2 and 3 he made several statements and recognitions indicating memories of Chatchewan's life. He never spoke abundantly about the previous life, and he ceased doing so completely when he was about 3.

In February 1977 Professor Kloom and I interviewed Anurak's father, Chamnong Sithipan, about the case. Unfortunately, both Anurak and his mother were away at that time. However, we were able to return about a year later, and in March 1978 we met Anurak, his mother, Wandhana, his grandfather Champa, and two more of his siblings. On this occasion, Chamnong was away, but we had already obtained a statement from him the previous year.

Relevant Facts of Geography

Laemphapa is a small village located about 28 kilometers south of Bangkok near the right (west) bank of the Chao Phraya River, which is (the Mekong River apart) the major river of Thailand. Laemphapa is 3 kilometers south of Paknam, which has an important pagoda that figured in the case of Ornuma Sua Ying Yong. Laemphapa is located on a klong that drains into the Chao Phraya River, and the village extends almost to the river. The river there is tidal, and strong tidal currents run in and out of the tributary klongs, such as that at Laemphapa.

The Life and Death of Chatchewan Sithipan

Chatchewan Sithipan was his parents' oldest child. He was born in 1953 and was a schoolboy of between 13 and 14 when he drowned. In February 1977 Chamnong said that Chatchewan had drowned "about 10 years ago," so I place the drowning in the first few months of 1967.

Chamnong was not himself present when Chatchewan drowned, but his account of the drowning was somewhat more detailed (even though secondhand) than that of Wandhana, who was present. Chatchewan could swim, and he was cautious about the strong tidal currents in the klong. On the day of his drowning he had tied himself to a piling in the klong so that he could not be carried away by the tidal current, perhaps into the nearby Chao Phraya River. However, when the tide came in and the water rose, he could not loosen himself, and he was in danger of drowning. His mother (who must by this time have been in the water herself) tried quickly to cut or loosen the cord by which he was tied, but did not succeed. Chatchewan told his mother and grandmother (who was also trying to help) to leave him, or they too would be drowned.

When Chatchewan's body was finally pulled out of the water, he was unconscious. A doctor came, but made no effort to resuscitate the drowned boy. Champa, the boy's grandfather, became angry with the doctor for seeming "just to let Chatchewan die."

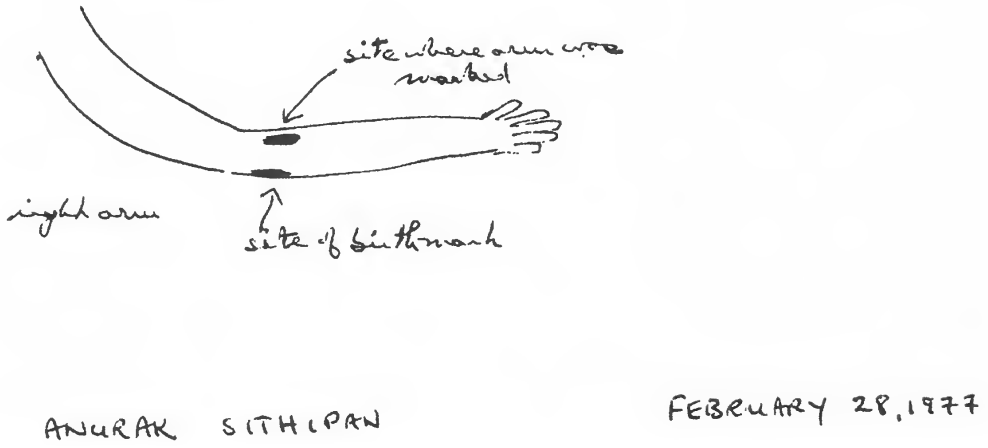

Figure 10-28 Sketch made in February 1977 showing the site of the marking of Chatchewan's body and the site of Anurak's birthmark.

The Marking of Chatchewan's Body. When the family accepted the fact of Chatchewan's death, they decided to make a mark on his body in the hope that he would be reborn among them and be recognized by a corresponding birthmark. Accordingly, Chatchewan's maternal grandfather, Champa, asked his adoptive son, Inn, to mark Chatchewan's body with charcoal. Inn then put a charcoal mark on the lateral side of Chatchewan's right elbow. (Chamnong remembered the marking substance as ink, not charcoal.) Chamnong, Wandhana, and Champa all witnessed the marking; I did not meet Inn. From Chamnong's description (corroborated, the following year, by Wandhana and Champa) of where Inn placed the mark, I drew the sketch shown in Figure 10-28. (Anurak's birthmark was close to this site but not at exactly the same site; the informants did not claim that the two locations were exactly the same.) According to Chamnong, Inn made the mark "on the front of the upper right forearm."

Chatchewan's body was kept for a year and then cremated. (It is not unusual in Thailand to defer cremation after death, sometimes for many years; the reason is most often economical, because cremation is expensive there.)

Events between Chatchewan's Death and Anurak's Birth

Some time after Chatchewan's death, a Buddhist monk told Chatchewan's family that his spirit was staying around the house and trying to help them. He advised them to light a joss-stick (burning stick with incense) and invoke the spirit's help for every enterprise. Chamnong did this and attributed a marked improvement in his economic situation to the assistance of Chatchewan's spirit.

The monk said that the spirit of Chatchewan would be born again to them within 6 years. (Chamnong said *6* years; Wandhana remembered the monk as having said the rebirth would occur within *4* years.)

Figure 10-29 Birthmark on the posterior aspect of the right forearm of Anurak's older sister Nusra. This birthmark was a hyperpigmented macule, round in shape, and approximately 1.2 centimeters in diameter. Another sibling, Nitinai, had a similar macule at the same location.

About a year after Chatchewan's death, Wandhana gave birth to a stillborn male child; it had no birthmark on its right elbow. A year after this birth, Wandhana gave birth to a live girl, Nusra. Nusra had a small birthmark toward the superior end of the dorsal surface of her right forearm (Figure 10-29), but it was distal to the site of Anurak's birthmark and much smaller. After Nusra, Anurak was born.

Comment. In the little less than 3 years that elapsed between Chatchewan's death and Anurak's birth, there was just enough time for these three pregnancies to have occurred successively.

Statements and Recognitions Made by Anurak

When Anurak was able to speak, he began to call himself "Pibong." This had been Chatchewan's nickname, and it means, roughly, "older brother." He also asked to be called "Chatchewan," and when anyone would tell him that he was not Chatchewan he would weep.

Anurak quarreled with his older brother Nitinai over who was the older. Nitinai was the seventh child of the family and the last to be born before Chatchewan's death.

On one occasion Anurak went to a wardrobe and searched through it looking for Chatchewan's boy scout uniform. He found it and said that it was his.

Anurak made another spontaneous recognition when he was about 3 years old. A friend of Chatchewan came to the house to invite one of Anurak's older sisters to accompany him to a party. (This young man was a cadet at a military college and must have been in his late teens.) Suddenly, Anurak, who had never seen this young man before, blurted out: "Aitit, are you taking my sister out? Be careful or I will kick you." The cadet stared in astonishment at Anurak, because no one else in the family, except Chatchewan, knew that his nickname was "Aitit."

Anurak's parents did not mention that he had ever referred to the drowning of Chatchewan. I failed to ask a direct question about this, but because I showed interest in whatever Anurak had said about the previous life, I think his parents, particularly Wandhana, would have told us if Anurak had referred to the drowning.

Anurak's Behavior Related to the Previous Life

Circumstances and Manner of Anurak's Speaking about the Previous Life. Anurak made few statements of any kind that could be identified as expressing imaged memories of the previous life, so I can say nothing about special circumstances that stimulated them.

I have already mentioned that Anurak had a strong identification with Chatchewan shown by his wish to be called by Chatchewan's name and nickname, and by his attempt to claim seniority (from Chatchewan's point of view) over his (Anurak's) older brother Nitinai.

Anurak's Phobia of Water. Chamnong thought that Anurak had never had a fear of water, but his wife (and Anurak himself) said that he had had such a fear. According to Wandhana (speaking in March 1978), Anurak had been afraid of the water when young, and he had not learned to swim until the year before, when he was 7. This is definitely older than average for a boy living beside a klong in Thailand.

Anurak told us (also in 1978) that he had been afraid of the water when young, but was no longer so. He attributed his fear of the water to crocodiles.

Comment. In saying that Anurak was not afraid of the water, Chamnong mentioned that he and his wife were afraid of his going in the water, presumably fearing another drowning accident. Almost certainly they or other persons would have referred to Chatchewan's drowning in Anurak's presence. Their concern would

have affected Anurak, so that I hesitate to say that his fear of the water derived from a subliminal memory of Chatchewan's drowning.

As for crocodiles, Professor Kloom learned that there were no crocodiles in the klong or river at Laemphapa in 1978, but there had been some there formerly; we did not learn when they moved away.

Anurak's Birthmark

Figure 10-27 shows that Anurak's birthmark was a large irregularly shaped hyperpigmented macule extending over most of the posterior surface of the right elbow. Its center was almost black. It was approximately 5 centimeters long and 5 centimeters wide. Wandhana and Champa both said that no other member of the family had a birthmark on the right elbow. In 1978 I took advantage of the availability of some members of the family to examine them myself. Wandhana and Champa had no such birthmark; and neither did Anurak's older sister Nusra or his older brother Nitinai. However, each of these siblings had small birthmarks (also hyperpigmented macules) on the superior part of the dorsal aspect of the right forearm. Figure 10-29 shows the birthmark on Nusra, which was inferior in location to the birthmark on Anurak's elbow and much smaller. It was a hyperpigmented macule, roundish in shape and approximately 1.2 centimeters in diameter. Anurak also had a hyperpigmented, slightly elevated nevus in the same general area of his forearm; it can be seen in Figure 10-27. It was closer to the wrist, however, than the macules on Nusra and Nitinai.

Comment. The similar birthmarks on the forearms of Nusra and Nitinai suggest that *their* nevi may have had a hereditary basis. In Chapter 9 I discussed this rare occurrence and described a case of a familial nevus. However, the birthmark on Anurak's elbow seems to me sufficiently different from theirs, both in size and location, to require a different explanation.

In all other cases of experimental birthmarks that I have studied the informants have said that the subject's birthmark was at the site where the previous personality's body had been marked. Some of the informants for these cases have emphasized the exact identity of the two locations. In most of these cases the informants knew the location of the subject's birthmark before they told us about the location of the mark made on the previous personality's body. They were thus at risk for harmonizing their memories of the two locations. We have no way of knowing how often such corruption of memories may occur. Be that as it may, the informants for Anurak's case deserve credit for telling us that his birthmark was a few centimeters away from the site where Chatchewan's body had been marked. Later in this chapter, I offer suggestions for improving testimony in cases of experimental birthmarks.

Other Information

In March 1978, when Anurak was just a few months over 8 years of age, he was in the second grade of school and stood first in his class.

THE CASE OF LIPONE YANGKHOONCHOW

Lipone Yangkhoonchow was born on September 28, 1962, in the Government Hospital at Nakhon Sri Thammaraj, Thailand. His parents were Laim Yangkhoonchow and his wife, Lima. They were Moslems. Lipone was the fifth and youngest of their children. Laim was a driver for the Government Hospital in Nakhon Sri Thammaraj, and I met him because the Jeep he drove was made available to me when I was studying cases in the area of Nakhon Sri Thammaraj in November 1974. On that occasion Professor Kloom Vajropala and Nasib Sirorasa were working with me. In the course of driving us to various cases Laim learned about our investigations and volunteered to tell us about the case of his son Lipone. He and his wife gave us the following information about it. Subsequently, Nasib Sirorasa obtained some additional information about the case.

On September 8, 1958, 4 years and 20 days before Lipone's birth, Laim and Lima had lost an infant son who had died when only 20 days old. The baby had pustules in his mouth and a high fever; I could not learn more about the cause of its death. Laim was away when the baby was born. At that time he was working and staying in Tungsong, which is in another part of Nakhon Sri Thammaraj Province. He returned and saw the baby, but was again away when it died. The baby had not yet been named.

Laim's paternal grandmother, Yam, marked the body of the baby boy after its death. Lima witnessed the marking. She said that Yam put some red lime on a leaf, added some water to make a paste, rubbed her thumb in the paste, and put it on the baby's back, rubbing the lime in a little. As she did this, she spoke to the departed baby, saying: "Please come back as Laim's son, so that he can see you." (Presumably the last phrase referred to Laim's absences, which meant that he had seen little of the baby who had died.) The baby's body was then buried in the local Moslem cemetery. (Yam had since died.)

After an interval, whose length I did not learn, Lima gave birth to another child, a girl. She had no birthmark. Lima's next child was Lipone. Lima said that his birthmark was at the site where Laim's grandmother had marked the dead infant boy.

Lipone had no memories of a previous life.

Lipone's Birthmark

Lipone's birthmark was a flat hyperpigmented macule on his lower left back. Figure 10-30 shows its appearance in 1974, when Lipone was a little over 12 years of age. Its area was approximately 6 centimeters by 3 centimeters.

Lima told us that the birthmark had not changed in relative size or in position since Lipone's birth, but she said that it had become darker since his birth.

No other member of the family had a birthmark at the site of Lipone's.

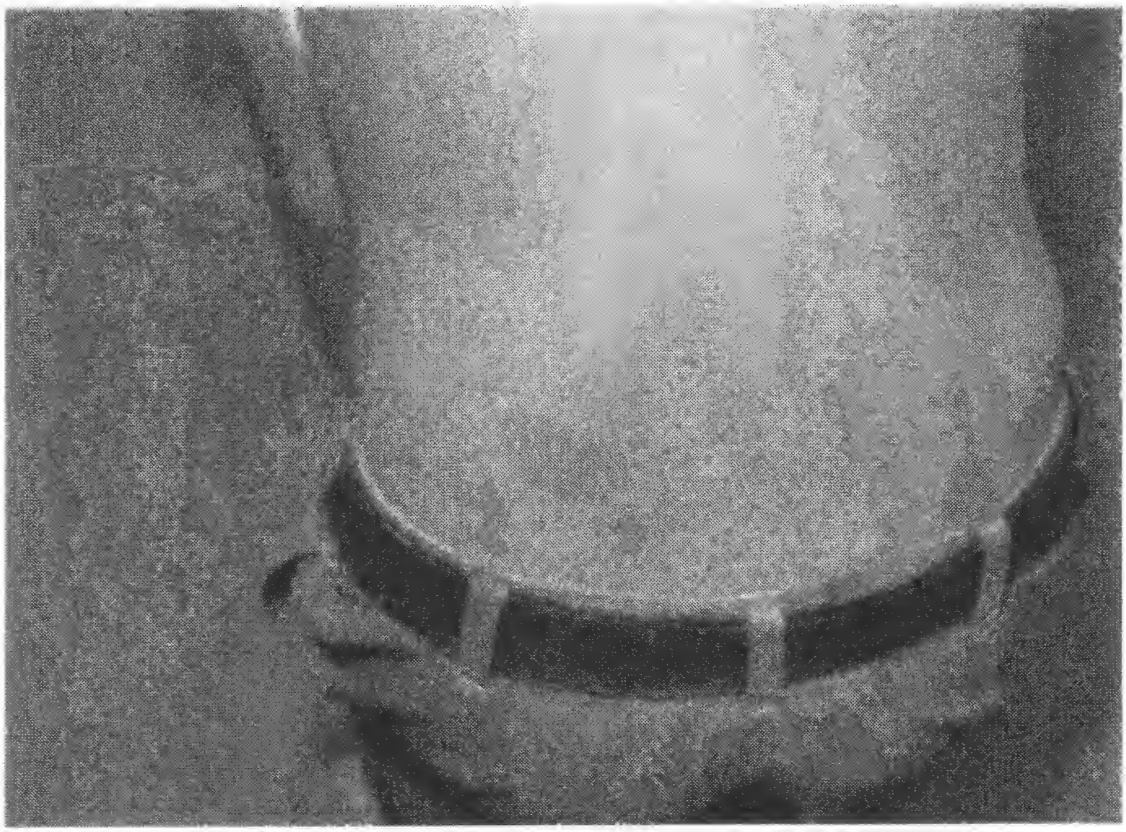

Figure 10-30 Birthmark on lower left back of Lipone as it appeared in November 1974, when he was 12 years old. The birthmark was a hyperpigmented macule roughly oval in shape and measuring approximately 6 centimeters by 3 centimeters.

The Attitude of Lipone's Family toward the Case

I mentioned above that Lipone's parents were Moslems, and so were other members of Laim's family. (I am not sure about the religious affiliation of Lima's parents.) I asked Laim and Lima to what sect of Islam they belonged, but they did not know this. Since Laim's father was called Ali, I have supposed that they were Shiites. Be that as it may, in 1974 they believed in reincarnation. Earlier, in 1958, they had been skeptical when Yam applied the red lime to the dead baby boy. Yam then had a stronger belief in reincarnation than Laim and Lima had. However, they were both impressed when they saw Lipone's birthmark, and for Laim it appears to have been a decisive factor in consolidating his belief in reincarnation.

THE CASE OF MA CHOE HNIN HTET

Summary of the Case and Its Investigation

Ma Choe Hnin Htet was born in Rangoon, Burma, on September 27, 1976. Her parents were U Khin Maung Nyunt and Daw Myint Myint May, and she was

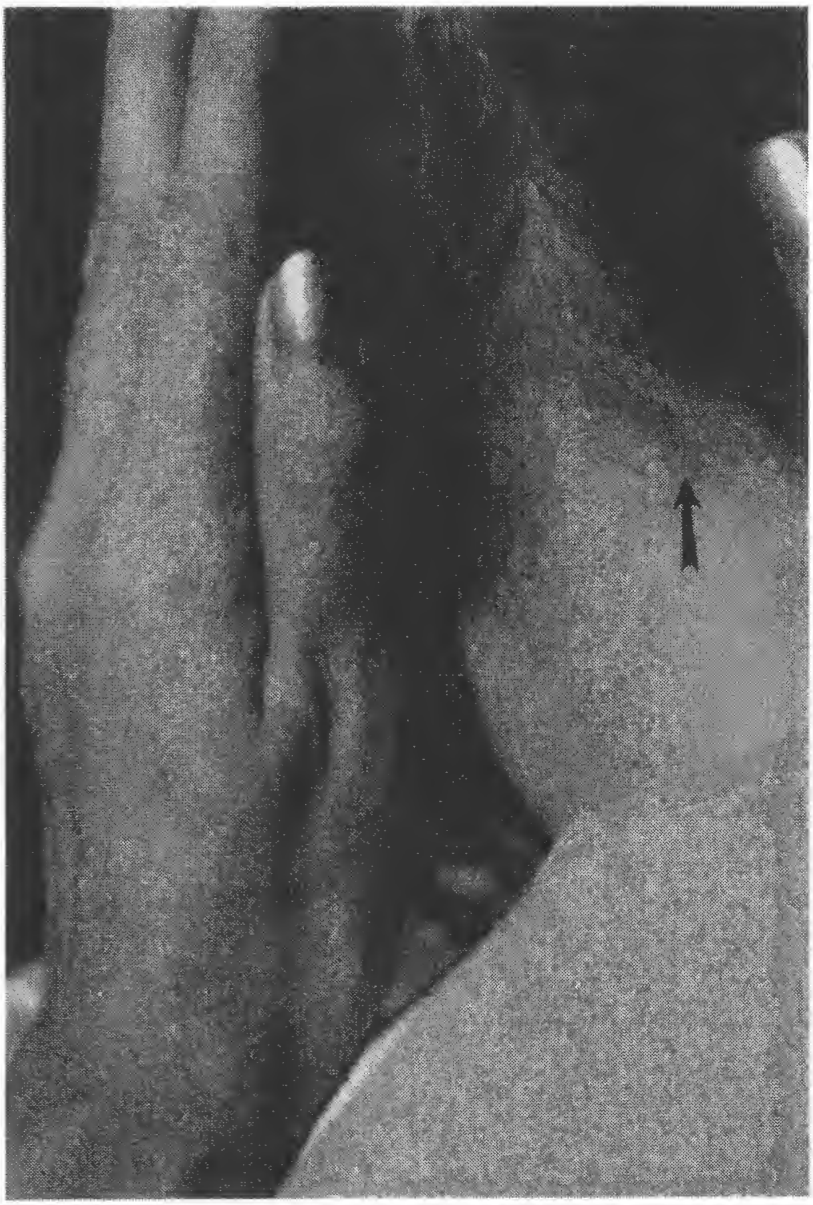

Figure 10-31 Birthmark on the back of Ma Choe Hnin Htet's neck as it appeared in November 1980, when she was just over 4 years old. The birthmark was an irregularly shaped area of erythema on the left side of the neck.

the second of their three children; she had an older sister and also a younger sibling whose sex I did not learn. U Khin Maung Nyunt was a sailor in the Burmese Navy.

Before Ma Choe Hnin Htet's birth several persons had dreams about a deceased younger sister of Daw Myint Myint May, Ma Lai Lai Way. She had died at the age of about 20 during an operation on her heart at the Rangoon General Hospital on August 26, 1975; and the dreams, which I shall describe below, indicated that Ma Lai Lai Way was going to be reborn as her older sister's baby.

Immediately after Ma Choe Hnin Htet's birth she was found to have a red birthmark at the left side of the back of her neck (Figure 10-31). Her family at first attached no significance to this birthmark, because they did not then know

Figure 10-32 Birthmark on lower chest and upper abdomen of Ma Choe Hnin Htet as it appeared in November 1980, when she was just over 4 years old. The birthmark was a linear area of hypopigmentation in the midline extending from the lower sternum to about midway between the xiphoid process and the umbilicus.

that Ma Lai Lai Way's close friends, who had prepared her body for cremation, had placed a mark of lipstick at the left side of the back of the neck. However, within a few days a neighbor, Daw Kauk, told the family about this marking.

Several years later, someone suggested to Ma Choe Hnin Htet's family that she might have a birthmark related to the incision made on Ma Lai Lai Way's chest for the operation on her heart. By this time Ma Choe Hnin Htet was about 4 years old, but a long line of decreased pigmentation was found in the midline of her lower chest and upper abdomen (Figure 10-32).

Ma Choe Hnin Htet began to speak when she was about a year old, and at this time when anyone asked her what her name was, she would say: "Lai Lai." At this age also, when she could barely crawl, she would pick out clothes that Ma Lai Lai Way had owned from a larger group of clothes piled in a wardrobe. As she grew older, she made further statements about the life of Ma Lai Lai Way and showed several unusual behaviors that had been characteristic of Ma Lai Lai Way. She also recognized some persons Ma Lai Lai Way had known.

The case came to the attention of U Win Maung in the autumn of 1980, and he made an extensive investigation of it in October, 1980. A few weeks later, in November, I was in Rangoon, and together we extended the investigation. We interviewed some informants with whom U Win Maung had already talked and also some new ones.

In August 1985, U Win Maung visited Ma Choe Hnin Htet and her family again and learned about her further development since 1980.

Persons Interviewed during the Investigation

In Rangoon we interviewed:

Daw Myint Myint May, Ma Choe Hnin Htet's mother and Ma Lai Lai Way's older sister
Daw May Ma, Ma Lai Lai Way's mother (and also Daw Myint Myint May's mother)
Daw Khin Lay Win, older sister of Daw Myint Myint May and Ma Lai Lai Way
U Ohn Khin, Ma Lai Lai Way's father
Ma Khin Soe Yee, friend and classmate of Ma Lai Lai Way
Ma Myint Myint Oo, friend and classmate of Ma Lai Lai Way
Ma Ohn Kyi, friend and classmate of Ma Lai Lai Way
Daw Kyin Sein, neighbor and friend of Daw Myint Myint May
Dr. Khin Maung Thaw, surgeon who had operated on Ma Lai Lai Way

In addition to the above persons whom U Win Maung and I met together, U Win Maung interviewed another neighbor of the family, Daw Kauk, whom he met early in November 1980.

Our interviews with Ma Lai Lai Way's family (also Ma Choe Hnin Htet's) were made easier by their having a joint household, so that Ma Choe Hnin Htet's maternal grandparents and (unmarried) maternal aunt (Daw Khin Lay Win) were all living in the same house with Ma Choe Hnin Htet's parents and their children.

We brought to meet Ma Choe Hnin Htet two persons known to Ma Lai Lai Way whom she had not yet met. We hoped that she could recognize these persons, and she did recognize one but not the other.

In the course of the visits for these recognitions and several other visits for interviews with the adults of the family, we naturally saw much of Ma Choe Hnin Htet, who was nearly always in her family's house when we came to visit. She was friendly, and she talked with the visitors we sometimes brought with us.

Nevertheless, I do not think we can say that we interviewed her, and what we learned about her memories of the previous life came entirely from her mother and other adults of her family.

Ma Choe Hnin Htet's father, U Khin Maung Nyunt, was posted outside of Rangoon when we investigated the case in 1980, and we did not meet him then. In 1985 U Win Maung met him briefly.

The Life, Death, and Character of Ma Lai Lai Way

Ma Lai Lai Way was born in Rangoon in about 1955. Her parents were U Ohn Khin and Daw May Ma, and she was their fourth child and fourth daughter. After she was born, her parents had one more daughter and two sons. She had congenital heart disease (patent ductus arteriosus and patent interventricular septum) for which she was ultimately operated on. (The diagnosis was confirmed from the records of the Rangoon General Hospital which we were able to study.)

Her health was extremely poor, and she was able to attend school only irregularly. She spent much time in bed. I did not learn many details of her academic record. She was studious, but for reasons of health she failed twice to pass the examinations of the 10th grade; and she was still in high school when she was 20 years old.

At that time she was admitted to the Rangoon General Hospital and remained there 4 months for appraisal and treatment. Her cardiac condition seemed remediable with surgery, and she and her family agreed to having a corrective operation. This took place on August 26, 1975. Unfortunately, some of the equipment failed during the operation, and Ma Lai Lai Way died while still on the operating table.

Ma Lai Lai Way was a much beloved person whose death affected her friends and classmates almost as much as it did the members of her family. She had several characteristics and minor peculiarities of behavior that her family later observed in Ma Choe Hnin Htet.

Ma Lai Lai Way had been more than usually religious, and when she was ill in bed she was noted to be always reciting with a Buddhist rosary in her hands.

She had a habit of wearing a ring not on the fourth (or ring) finger, but on her forefinger.

If other members of the family were out, she did not like to go to sleep at night until they had all come home and, so to speak, been accounted for.

She was concerned more than other members of the family about the bolting of doors and windows of the house at night.

Ma Lai Lai Way was particularly fond of her oldest sister, Daw Khin Lay Win. In fact, she was somewhat possessive toward her. She tried to get rid of boys who came to the house with a view to courting Daw Khin Lay Win and openly said that she did not wish her to marry. In the end Daw Khin Lay Win had not married up to the time of our investigation of the case in 1980. This was partly from her own choice and partly out of consideration for her ailing sister.

Daw Myint Myint May said that Ma Lai Lai Way had some of the characteristics of an older woman and was inclined to dominate other persons. Her attitude toward her older sister's suitors seems to illustrate this.

Finally, I should note that Ma Lai Lai Way was fond of music.

The Marking of Ma Lai Lai Way's Body. Three of Ma Lai Lai Way's classmates volunteered to prepare her body for its cremation, and they did this (in the mortuary of the Rangoon General Hospital) 2 days after Ma Lai Lai Way's death, on August 28, 1975. In the course of preparing the body for cremation the three young ladies remembered and discussed among themselves the Burmese custom of marking a dead person's body in the expectation that when that person reincarnates he or she will have a birthmark at the place marked on the dead person. They decided to place a mark on Ma Lai Lai Way's body at a site where a corresponding birthmark would not be conspicuous or disfiguring.

U Win Maung and I interviewed the three classmates who had participated in the preparation of Ma Lai Lai Way's body and who were firsthand witnesses to the marking of her body. One of them had actually made the mark.

Ma Khin Soe Yee told us that she had marked Ma Lai Lai Way with red lipstick "under the left ear...on the neck." As the body was presumably lying supine, these words indicated that she had made the mark at the back of the neck on the left side. Ma Khin Soe Yee had recently seen the birthmark on Ma Choe Hnin Htet when she spoke with U Win Maung and me, and her knowledge of the birthmark might have influenced her memory of where she had marked the body.

In this respect Ma Myint Myint Oo was a more important witness. At the time U Win Maung and I talked with her, in November 1980, she had never met Ma Choe Hnin Htet and knew nothing about her having any birthmarks. Ma Khin Soe Yee was present during our interview with Ma Myint Myint Oo, but I do not think she guided her in what to say. Ma Myint Myint Oo said that she remembered seeing Ma Khin Soe Yee make a mark with lipstick on the body "on the back of the neck behind the left ear."

Our third informant of this group, Ma Ohn Kyi, was a Moslem; but, like the other two principal witnesses for this event, she was devoted to Ma Lai Lai Way, and she did not object to speaking with us about it. She said: "We put lipstick on the back of the neck. I cannot recall which side of the neck, but it was somewhere at the back of the neck." Ma Khin Soe Yee said that Ma Ohn Kyi was weeping with grief during most of the time when they were preparing and marking the body, so that she was of little help to the other two friends.

Daw Kauk, the neighbor of the family mentioned above, had been present when the three girls were preparing Ma Lai Lai Way's body for cremation. She had been assisting the girls and observed their marking of the body. She said: "I do not remember exactly where they put the marks, but I think they put one on the forehead and the other behind the ear."

Ma Lai Lai Way had had a tiny mole on her upper lip. It must have been extremely small, because I could see nothing of it in a photograph of Ma Lai Lai Way that her family showed us. However, Ma Lai Lai Way had evidently regarded

it as a "beauty spot," and had tried to accentuate it. Her classmates, remembering this, applied some eyebrow blacking to this mole on Ma Lai Lai Way's body with a view to making it more prominent and facilitating development of a mole at the same site when Ma Lai Lai Way reincarnated.

As the three young ladies were marking the body in the way I have described, they prayed and expressed a wish for Ma Lai Lai Way to come back among them. The body was cremated 3 or 4 hours later.

Some Announcing Dreams

A neighbor and friend of Daw Myint Myint May's family, Daw Kyin Sein, dreamed about Ma Lai Lai Way after her death. Daw Myint Myint May gave U Win Maung a secondhand report of this dream, and we decided to meet Daw Kyin Sein ourselves and obtain her account. The two accounts differed in some details, but not in their main content. Daw Kyin Sein said that about a month after Ma Lai Lai Way's death she dreamed that she was at the house of Ma Lai Lai Way and Daw Myint Myint May, and she saw Ma Lai Lai Way lying between Daw Myint Myint May and her husband (U Khin Maung Nyunt). Feeling that Ma Lai Lai Way's conduct was not quite proper, she asked her: "What are you doing here?" and Ma Lai Lai Way replied: "I am sleeping here with them." Daw Kyin Sein tried to call Ma Lai Lai Way from the house, but she would not leave. The next day Daw Kyin Sein told Daw Myint Myint May about her dream and advised them not to weep for Ma Lai Lai Way anymore. She said she had learned that weeping can drive away a person who wants to be reborn. (Daw Myint Myint May told us that Ma Lai Lai Way had, in the dream, said that her mother's [that is Daw May Ma's] weeping kept driving her away from the house. It was true that Daw May Ma had been crying almost every day since Ma Lai Lai Way's death.)

Daw Kyin Sein said that when she had her dream she did not know that Daw Myint Myint May was already 2 months pregnant. There is, however, a discrepancy here, and it is more likely that Daw Myint Myint May was correct when she told us that she became pregnant soon after learning about Daw Kyin Sein's dream.

Daw Khin Lay Win (the older sister of Daw Myint Myint May and Ma Lai Lai Way) also dreamed of her dead sister about 3 months after she died. She said:

> I saw her dead body being brought back to our house in a taxi. The whole family cried out: "Lai Lai is not dead yet." Her body was placed in the front room. I also saw my mother swinging a cradle. Lai Lai's body began to disappear and at the same time a child who was not the older girl, Ma Aye Mya Win [Daw Myint Myint May's older daughter], was seen in the cradle. But the baby was not Lai Lai either.

In a later interview Daw Khin Lay Win emphasized that in her dream the baby in the cradle did not seem to be either Ma Aye Mya Win or Ma Lai Lai Way, and yet she "felt somehow that the baby in the cradle was Ma Lai Lai Way." Daw

Khin Lay Win added that she did not often have dreams, and she thought that she was half-awake when she had this one.

Daw Myint Myint May also dreamed several times of her dead sister. Her dreams occurred when she was already pregnant with Ma Choe Hnin Htet.[32] She said:

> I saw Ma Lai Lai Way's body being carried into our house. As soon as the body was in the front room, it became alive. Lai Lai seemed to rise up from the floor, all smiles and full of happiness. She said: "I am not dead. I am coming back home."

This dream was repeated several times, but one of the dreams had a further scene. In it Ma Lai Lai Way seemed to leave the family's house and go toward that of a neighbor across the street. She seemed to be in a huff. Her mother and aunt tried to mollify her, but she refused to come back. Then the dreamer (Daw Myint Myint May) went to Ma Lai Lai Way and tried to persuade her to return, but unsuccessfully. Finally, Daw Myint Myint May said: "Look. I fed you with milk from my breast when you were sick." At this Ma Lai Lai Way softened and followed her sister home. (The last episode of this dream referred to a time when Ma Lai Lai Way was extremely ill and drinking a glass of milk daily. Some Burmese people believe that human milk has a special "life-giving" value for persons who are seriously ill; preferably, the human milk should come from the same family. It happened that Daw Myint Myint May was then nursing her first daughter, and so some of her milk was occasionally added to the cow-milk given to Ma Lai Lai Way. However, Ma Lai Lai Way was not told about this addition.)

Pregnancy Cravings Experienced by Daw Myint Myint May

Daw Myint Myint May said that during her pregnancy with Ma Choe Hnin Htet she had strong cravings for two foods that Ma Lai Lai Way had much relished. These were apples and roasted (or broiled) duck. Daw Myint Myint May found that she often ate an entire roasted duck and could also eat four or five apples at a time. (We shall see that Ma Choe Hnin Htet showed a preference for the same foods.) Daw Myint Myint May did not have similar cravings during her pregnancy with her first child.

Statements and Recognitions Made by Ma Choe Hnin Htet

Ma Choe Hnin Htet seems to have made only a few statements about the previous life. Her grandmother, Daw May Ma, said that she would not answer questions, even ones asked by a family member, or talk about the previous life

[32]This time of occurrence is unusual for announcing dreams in Burma. They usually occur shortly before the subject's conception (Stevenson, 1983a). In contrast, announcing dreams among the Tlingit occur most often shortly before the subject's birth (Stevenson, 1966).

when other people were around. She confided in her grandmother when other adults were out at work and they were alone. Daw May Ma told U Win Maung of the following conversation:

> Daw May Ma: Who are you?
> Ma Choe Hnin Htet: Lai Lai Way. You were my mother. Your name is Daw May Ma. My father's name is U Ohn Khin.
> Daw May Ma: How did you go away?
> Ma Choe Hnin Htet: I died when the doctors operated on me. After dying I stayed near them [meaning the doctors].
> Daw May Ma: I still remember my daughter with affection.
> Ma Choe Hnin Htet: Because mummy was always crying, I came back.

Ma Choe Hnin Htet also spoke with her grandfather, U Ohn Khin, and he recalled her saying that she had been operated upon in a hospital. He also remembered that she pointed to the front of her chest (where one birthmark was) and said that she was operated on at the place she was pointing at. U Ohn Khin did not mention Ma Choe Hnin Htet's age when she made this remark, but he did remember that she had begun referring to the previous life at "a very young age; just about a year old." She might, therefore, have been trying to draw attention to the birthmark on her chest and abdomen before other members of the family noticed it.

I learned of two recognitions Ma Choe Hnin Htet made; and I myself observed her make one recognition and try to make another.

Ma Khin Soe Yee, the friend who had marked the back of Ma Lai Lai Way's neck with lipstick, visited Ma Choe Hnin Htet's family when she was a baby, but then did not return for about 4 years. On November 21, 1980 (3 days before the interviews U Win Maung and I had on November 24, 1980) she and Ma Ohn Kyi (another of Ma Lai Lai Way's close friends) called at Ma Choe Hnin Htet's house. Ma Choe Hnin Htet greeted her in a friendly way and shook hands, asking Ma Khin Soe Yee to call her Lai Lai Way. She then led Ma Khin Soe Yee (and Ma Ohn Kyi) to meet her grandmother. Daw May Ma asked Ma Choe Hnin Htet: "Do you know her?" Ma Choe Hnin Htet replied: "Yes, of course. We were friends." Ma Khin Soe Yee said that Ma Choe Hnin Htet had not called her by name, and Ma Ohn Kyi said that she had not spoken her name either.

Daw Myint Myint May added some information about the visit of Ma Khin Soe Yee and Ma Ohn Kyi. This deserves mention, although I am not certain that Daw Myint Myint May was a firsthand witness of what she told us concerning this episode. She said that when Ma Choe Hnin Htet saw the two young ladies arriving at the gate, she told her older sister, Ma Aye Mya Win: "These are friends, and they are coming to see me." Ordinarily, when Ma Choe Hnin Htet would see visitors arriving, she would not greet them herself, but would go and call her parents; with these two visitors, however, she went out to the gate of the compound to greet them.

Daw Myint Myint May told of another recognition by Ma Choe Hnin Htet. This occurred when one day Ma Choe Hnin Htet saw her cousin (one Ma Thi Thi

U) wearing a deep orange longyi that had belonged to Ma Lai Lai Way. Ma Choe Hnin Htet claimed this as her own. (We did not interview Ma Thi Thi U.)

Daw Myint Myint May said (as I mentioned above) that even earlier Ma Choe Hnin Htet had been able to pick out Ma Lai Lai Way's clothes from among others with which they were piled together; but we did not learn details of which clothes she had recognized.

Recognitions Observed by Us. U Win Maung and I brought to Ma Choe Hnin Htet's house two persons known to Ma Lai Lai Way, but whom she had not yet met. The first was Ma Myint Myint Oo, one of the three girls who had put red lipstick on the back of Ma Lai Lai Way's neck. She and Ma Lai Lai Way had been classmates at school for 3 years and had been very friendly. (I have already given her testimony about the marking of Ma Lai Lai Way's body with lipstick.) Upon learning that Ma Myint Myint Oo had never met Ma Choe Hnin Htet, U Win Maung and I decided, somewhat impulsively, to take her to Ma Choe Hnin Htet's house and did so without giving any advance notice of our arrival. Ma Khin Soe Yee, who had introduced us to Ma Myint Myint Oo, accompanied us. When we arrived at Ma Choe Hnin Htet's house, we all sat down in the main living room without introducing Ma Myint Myint Oo. We then indicated her and asked Ma Choe Hnin Htet: "Who is she?" Without hesitating Ma Choe Hnin Htet said (quite loud enough for me to hear across the room): "Myint Myint Oo." She said that she knew Ma Myint Myint Oo, but when asked where she had known her, Ma Choe Hnin Htet became shy and did not respond.

About 2 weeks later, we brought to meet Ma Choe Hnin Htet the cardiac surgeon who had operated on Ma Lai Lai Way. This was Dr. Khin Maung Thaw. Ma Choe Hnin Htet did not recognize him in any distinct manner. After he had left she told her grandmother that she "knew him from a long time ago"; but she could not give his name.

Comment. Since Ma Choe Hnin Htet's failure to recognize Dr. Khin Maung Thaw, I have come to think of it as less surprising than it seemed to me at the time. It did not then occur to me that Ma Lai Lai Way in her conscious state (that is, apart from the 9 hours during the cardiac operation) probably saw little of Dr. Khin Maung Thaw. Ma Lai Lai Way would have had much more contact with some of the ward doctors who had looked after her during the 4 months when she had been in the hospital for appraisal of her condition before the operation. Perhaps Ma Choe Hnin Htet could have recognized one of them. It is significant also that Dr. Khin Maung Thaw, for his part, had not remembered Ma Lai Lai Way among the many patients on whom he had operated. There was, therefore, no strong emotional bond between him and Ma Lai Lai Way.

Ma Choe Hnin Htet's Statements about the Period after Ma Lai Lai Way's Death and before Her Birth. In the brief conversation with her grandmother that I quoted above, Ma Choe Hnin Htet mentioned that she (as Ma Lai Lai Way) after death stayed with the doctors who had operated on her. She never elaborated on this statement, but her family thought she meant that she had stayed at the Rangoon General Hospital, where Ma Lai Lai Way had been operated on and died. This was also where her friends had marked her body before it was cremated.

Ma Choe Hnin Htet's Behavior Related to the Previous Life

Ma Choe Hnin Htet's Identification with Ma Lai Lai Way. Ma Choe Hnin Htet asked other people to call her "Lai Lai," and when asked what her name was she would answer "Lai Lai" or, sometimes, "Mi Mi" (another familiar name given to Ma Lai Lai Way; it is a term of endearment for a daughter). She felt so strongly about what her right name was that when, to tease her, members of the family would say to her "You are not Lai Lai," she would burst into tears. The family agreed to call her "Lai Lai," but did not change her name officially.

Further evidence of Ma Choe Hnin Htet's identification with Ma Lai Lai Way came from her picking out clothes that had belonged to Ma Lai Lai Way; and from her putting her own clothes in the wardrobe that Ma Lai Lai Way had used.

In describing some of Ma Lai Lai Way's personal attributes, I mentioned her habit of wearing a ring on a forefinger, instead of on a ring finger. Ma Choe Hnin Htet liked to wear rings on a forefinger or a middle finger. (On the day of one of our visits to her home she had a ring on the middle finger of her right hand.) Once when Ma Khin Soe Yee visited the family, Ma Choe Hnin Htet was wearing a ring on her forefinger and playing with it. Her mother told her that it would slip off and get lost. To this Ma Choe Hnin Htet replied: "No. I have always worn the ring on the forefinger."

Ma Choe Hnin Htet's Attitude toward Older Members of the Family. Ma Choe Hnin Htet expressed an adult attitude in some of her behavior. Between the time when she became able to speak and about 3 years of age, she addressed her mother as "Ahma," meaning "older sister." She addressed her maternal uncle Maung Win Kyaw Min as "Brother" and her grandfather as "Papa," the term by which Ma Lai Lai Way had addressed him.

Ma Choe Hnin Htet's Phobias. Ma Choe Hnin Htet showed a marked concern about having the doors and windows of the house securely bolted at night. Ma Lai Lai Way had shown this trait also.

Ma Choe Hnin Htet also had a phobia of drugs, injections, and blood. She would turn pale at the sight of blood.

Other Behavior of Ma Choe Hnin Htet Related to the Previous Life. Ma Choe Hnin Htet showed a precocious piety and could recite Buddhist verses even at the age of 4. She was fond of music as Ma Lai Lai Way had been. Among foods she particularly liked roasted duck and apples. She tended to use slang in a manner that reminded her mother of a similar habit Ma Lai Lai Way had had. She did not like to go to sleep until all members of the household who might have been away had returned.

Daw Khin Lay Win had continued to have boyfriends and suitors, and Ma Choe Hnin Htet behaved toward them as if she was continuing the policy of opposition to such boyfriends that Ma Lai Lai Way had practiced. Ma Lai Lai Way had particularly disapproved of one man who came to visit her older sister, and when he appeared at the house one day, Ma Choe Hnin Htet would not even look at him. On one occasion when Daw Khin Lay Win had two or three men visitors Ma Choe Hnin Htet said to her grandmother (Daw May Ma): "Mummy, would you

allow that?" On another occasion she said to Daw May Ma: "Your daughter has too many male visitors. Are you going to stand for that?" Sometimes, Ma Choe Hnin Htet intervened more directly. She would pointedly ask what time it was and then suggest to the suitors that it was time for them to go home.

Ma Choe Hnin Htet's Birthmarks

Figure 10-31 shows an area of erythema on the back of Ma Choe Hnin Htet's neck to the left of the midline. When I examined and sketched this, it seemed to me somewhat round and about 2.5 centimeters in diameter. However, its shape appears more irregular than round in Figure 10-31.

This birthmark was more prominent at Ma Choe Hnin Htet's birth than it was at the time we examined (and photographed) it in 1980, when Ma Choe Hnin Htet was 4 years old; but I cannot say whether the loss of prominence was due to the growth of hair that covered it or to an actual fading of the birthmark itself.

Ma Choe Hnin Htet had a second birthmark on the front of her chest and abdomen. It was completely different in appearance from the one on the back of her neck. It consisted (in 1980) of a long line of hypopigmentation that ran in the midline or close to it in a continuous but slightly curving line from a point about midway between the sternal notch and the xiphoid process to about halfway between the xiphoid process and the umbilicus (Figure 10-32). At its widest it was no more than 1 millimeter wide.

This birthmark corresponded to part of the incision made at the beginning of the heart operation Ma Lai Lai Way had had. We obtained at the Rangoon General Hospital a copy of the report of the operation performed on Ma Lai Lai Way. It described the "midsternal splitting of the chest for the exposure of the heart."

When Dr. Khin Maung Thaw, who had operated on Ma Lai Lai Way, came to Ma Choe Hnin Htet's house with the hope we had that she might recognize him, I showed him the birthmark on her chest and abdomen and asked him what he thought about its location in relation to the usual incision for an operation on the heart in cases like that of Ma Lai Lai Way. (Readers will recall that he did not remember her particular operation, but he could speak in general from experience of similar operations.) Dr. Khin Maung Thaw told me that in the usual operation for open-heart surgery the incision extends from the upper end of the sternum inferiorly to a point about halfway between the xiphoid process and the umbilicus. After examining Ma Choe Hnin Htet's birthmark, he said that he thought it extended too far inferiorly compared with the usual incision for the operation that Ma Lai Lai Way had had. From my experience with the movements of some other birthmarks (that of Nasruddin Shah, for example) I suggested that perhaps this one on Ma Choe Hnin Htet had moved inferiorly in relation to other tissues as she had grown. Dr. Khin Maung Thaw agreed that this was possible.

Ma Choe Hnin Htet had no birthmark on the upper lip corresponding to the small mole on the lip of Ma Lai Lai Way, which her friends had touched up with a black eyebrow pencil.

Other Relevant Medical Information. No other member of the family had birthmarks like Ma Choe Hnin Htet's. No other member of the family had

heart disease, and apparently Ma Choe Hnin Htet herself had no heart disease and enjoyed good health.

Daw Myint Myint May had no complications of her pregnancy with Ma Choe Hnin Htet.

Comments on the Evidence of Paranormal Processes in the Case

I attach no importance to the details of the names of her grandparents stated by Ma Choe Hnin Htet. She might have learned these names and indeed nearly everything else that she said about the previous life through overhearing members of her family mention them in her presence. The importance of the case derives from Ma Choe Hnin Htet's unusual behavior and from her birthmarks.

Her identification with Ma Lai Lai Way was nearly as strong as the strongest of similar identifications that I have observed in other cases. She wanted to be called "Lai Lai," although she fell short of refusing to respond, as have a few other subjects, when called by her given name.

Ma Choe Hnin Htet made few recognitions of which we could learn adequate details. However, U Win Maung and I did witness her clearly state the full name of a young woman (Ma Myint Myint Oo) whom she had never met before and in conditions that make us certain no one had given her any clue as to the recognized person's identity. As readers of my case reports know, I attach less importance to recognitions in weighing the evidence of a case than do most of the informants for them. Here, however, was a recognition for which I could vouch myself, and I think we can only account for it by supposing that Ma Choe Hnin Htet had some paranormal knowledge of the identity of Ma Myint Myint Oo.

The testimony concerning the experimental marking on the back of Ma Lai Lai Way's neck seems unusually strong in this case. Ma Myint Myint Oo made her statement about where the body had been marked without knowing that Ma Choe Hnin Htet had a birthmark and without hearing what her partners (Ma Khin Soe Yee and Ma Ohn Kyi) said about where the body had been marked.

Unfortunately, Ma Lai Lai Way's friends chose the worst possible site for marking with the hope of achieving an impressive experimental birthmark. As I explained in connection with the cases of Yvonne Ehrlich and Navalkishore Yadav, many newborn babies have a "salmon patch" type of nevus flammeus at the back of the neck. (They are sometimes called nuchal nevi.) Although most of these areas of erythema fade after a few weeks or months, about 5% persist into later childhood (Hodgman, Freeman, and Levan, 1971).

The long thin birthmark on Ma Choe Hnin Htet in the midline of the lower thorax and upper abdomen corresponds for a major part of its length with the incision made when Ma Lai Lai Way was operated on. The discrepancy between the probable location of the incision and the birthmark at the age of 4 may be attributable to shifting of the birthmark in relation to other tissues as Ma Choe Hnin Htet grew.

Daw Myint Myint May knew about the incision on her sister's body for her operation; probably she did not know its exact location, but she would have known

that the front of the chest would be opened to expose the heart. For the birthmark corresponding to the surgical incision, therefore, we cannot exclude the possibility of a maternal impression on the fetus. However, we can exclude this possibility with regard to the birthmark on the back of Ma Choe Hnin Htet's neck. Daw Myint Myint May told us that she only learned about the mark placed on Ma Lai Lai Way's neck some days after Ma Choe Hnin Htet's birth. Her mother, Daw May Ma, and her older sister, Daw Khin Lay Win, confirmed this; they themselves knew nothing about the marking of Ma Lai Lai Way's body until after Ma Choe Hnin Htet's birth, and they were sure that Daw Myint Myint May was equally ignorant about the marking.

Ma Choe Hnin Htet's Later Development

In August 1985, U Win Maung learned that Ma Choe Hnin Htet, who was then almost 9 years old, was in good general health. She was attending school and doing well in the third grade.

Although Ma Choe Hnin Htet's physical health seemed good, she was timid and easily alarmed. When she was anxious, she would turn pale and feel faint and dizzy. She was still markedly phobic of medical procedures, especially of injections. She once accompanied her mother to a clinic where her mother was to receive an injection of vitamins; but when she saw the syringe and needle, she suddenly cried that she wanted to go home. She turned pale and felt faint and dizzy. Her phobia extended also to oral medicines, which she could only take with difficulty.

Because members of her family said that Ma Choe Hnin Htet's heart would "beat wildly" when she became alarmed, it occurred to us that she might have some cardiac arrhythmia or other heart disease. We offered to pay for her to have a consultation with a cardiologist. However, her family declined this proposal from a fear of having her frightened by the necessary examinations.

Ma Choe Hnin Htet still showed behavior that reminded her family of Ma Lai Lai Way. She still liked to be called "Lai Lai," but answered readily to her own name.

The red birthmark on the back of Ma Choe Hnin Htet's neck had faded considerably, but would become prominent whenever she became angry or otherwise excited. The birthmark on her lower chest and upper abdomen had not changed in appearance or position.

THE CASE OF MAUNG HLA WIN

Summary of the Case and Its Investigation

Maung Hla Win was born on June 14, 1978, in Ingone village, which is in the area of Yamethin in Upper Burma. His parents were U San Maung and Daw Saw Shwe, and he was the fourth of their five children. U San Maung was a cultivator.

Maung Hla Win's mother noticed a birthmark on the sole of his left foot soon after his birth (Figures 10-33 and 10-34). However, the birthmark's possible signifi-

Figure 10-33 Birthmark on Maung Hla Win's left foot as it appeared in June 1981, when he was 3 years old. The birthmark was an approximately rectangular area of hyperpigmentation with dimensions of about 6 centimeters in length and 3 centimeters in width.

Figure 10-34 Photograph (taken at the same time as Figure 10-33) showing the extension of Maung Hla Win's birthmark around the sole of his foot.

cance was first noted by a visitor, Daw Ohn Kyi, who had come from the village of Nyaungnabin to Ingone in order to visit her aunt, Daw Thein Khin. Daw Ohn Kyi made the following statement to U Win Maung at her home in Nyaungnabin on May 22, 1981.

Q: When did you go to Ingone village?
A: About a year ago.
Q: How did you meet the child [Maung Hla Win]?
A: I heard that Daw Thein Khin's niece [her nephew's wife, Daw Saw Shwe] had recently had a baby. So I made a friendly visit to make inquiries about their health.
Q: How old was the baby then?
A: About a month old.[33]
Q: Did you see the child?
A: Yes, I did. I cradled the baby in my arms, and when I noticed a dark smudge on the sole of the foot, I tried to remove it, thinking that it was some dirt. But I could not. Then I suddenly remembered Maung Myint Lwin's case, in which his dying body was similarly marked.
Q: What did you do next?
A: I went and saw Daw Than Shein [Maung Myint Lwin's mother] when I got back to Nyaungnabin village the next day.
Q: Did the baby's mother, Daw Saw Shwe, say anything about the birthmark on her son?
A: Nothing at all, except that the child was born with it.

The person referred to in the above interview, Maung Myint Lwin, was a child who had died at Nyaungnabin village about 18 months before Maung Hla Win's birth. At first it appeared that the two families concerned in this case were completely unrelated, but further inquiry showed that there was a distant relationship through marriage, as I shall explain.

When Maung Hla Win was a little more than 1 year old, his mother took him with her on a bus journey to Pyinmana. When the bus went past Nyaungnabin village, he tried to stop it, saying that he wanted to get off there. This was not allowed. (His parents seldom traveled in that direction, and his mother had not even recognized Nyaungnabin herself.)

Maung Hla Win began to speak clearly at the age of about 1½. He soon began to make statements about a previous life that he said he had lived in "Nyaung-kar-yar" (his mispronunciation of Nyaungnabin). He frequently asked to be taken to Nyaungnabin and threatened to go there himself. When he was about 2

[33]If we have the correct date for Maung Hla Win's birth (which I think we do), and if he was only a month old when Daw Ohn Kyi first saw him and noted his birthmark, then Daw Ohn Kyi must have gone to Ingone village and seen him not 1 year, but about 2 years before her interview with U Win Maung in May 1981.

years old, Maung Myint Lwin's mother, Daw Than Shein, met him in Ingone, but he did not clearly recognize her.

This case came to U Win Maung's attention soon after it developed. Maung Myint Lwin's older brother, Maung Myint Thein, informed him about it. U Win Maung recorded (in May 1981) statements from seven persons directly concerned with the case in Ingone, Nyaungnabin, or Okshitgone (another village of the area).

After U Win Maung's extensive study of the case, there did not seem much that I could add to the investigation. Nevertheless, I went to Ingone (with U Win Maung) on March 1, 1984. I examined Maung Hla Win's birthmark and interviewed his mother, Daw Saw Shwe. I also met her husband's aunt, Daw Thein Khin, and developed genealogical information about the families concerned.

In December 1985, Daw Hnin Aye went to Nyaungnabin village and asked Daw Than Shein several questions about details of the case.

Persons Interviewed during the Investigation

In Ingone we interviewed:

Daw Saw Shwe, Maung Hla Win's mother
Daw Thein Khin, U San Maung's aunt by marriage

In Nyaungnabin U Win Maung interviewed:

Daw Than Shein, Maung Myint Lwin's mother
Daw Saw Myine, friend of Daw Than Shein
Daw Thoung, friend of Daw Than Shein
Daw Ohn Kyi, friend of Daw Than Shein

In Okshitgone U Win Maung interviewed:

U Khin Maung, Maung Myint Lwin's father
Maung Myint Thein, Maung Myint Lwin's older brother

Relevant Facts of Geography and Other Background Information

Ingone and Nyaungnabin are both villages in the area between Yamethin and Tatkon. They are about 30 kilometers apart. They are both near the main highway and also near the railway line connecting Rangoon and Mandalay.

The two families concerned in the case were remotely connected by marriage. We learned that Daw Thein Khin (a native of Nyaungnabin), who was married to U San Maung's maternal uncle, was a second cousin of U Khin Maung, Maung Myint Lwin's father. Maung Myint Lwin's family had other friends and relatives in Ingone, but we did not learn details about who they were.

The two families immediately concerned knew about each other. It happened that soon after Maung Myint Lwin's death, Daw Saw Shwe was traveling past Nyaungnabin, and someone at the Nyaungnabin bus stop asked her to carry a copy of the obituary notice about Maung Myint Lwin's death to Daw Thein Khin

in Ingone village. However, apart from such almost accidental contact, the two families seem not to have known each other before the case developed. Up to 1981 Daw Saw Shwe had never been into Nyaungnabin village.

Maung Myint Lwin's family was appreciably more prosperous than that of Maung Hla Win. When Daw Than Shein came to Ingone in order to meet Maung Hla Win, she stayed at Daw Thein Khin's house and asked for Maung Hla Win to be brought to her there. Daw Saw Shwe said that she allowed Maung Hla Win to meet Daw Than Shein, but she did not go herself. She explained that she was then nursing a new baby, but also said that she avoided meeting Daw Than Shein in order not to give an appearance of wanting to claim any property belonging to Maung Myint Lwin's family.

The Life and Death of Maung Myint Lwin

Maung Myint Lwin was born in Nyaungnabin in about 1962. His parents were U Khin Maung and his wife, Daw Than Shein. He was their second child and second son. Four other sons were born in the family after him. U Khin Maung was a cultivator.

Maung Myint Lwin was about 10 years old, and attending school, when he became ill with a disease affecting his right thigh. It swelled up with lumps having the appearance of furuncles or perhaps, taken altogether, that of a carbuncle. (The possibility of a cancer of the bone was suggested, but never confirmed, at least to his parents.) Later, Maung Myint Lwin's testicles (? scrotum) became swollen, and then his left thigh also became swollen. At one stage U Khin Maung noted "longitudinal red stripes" on Maung Myint Lwin, which suggests an inflammatory process spreading along the lymph vessels. Maung Myint Lwin was treated unsuccessfully, first in the hospital at Yamethin and then, for a longer period (3 months), at the Rangoon General Hospital. His condition, instead of improving, worsened, and his family brought him back to Nyaungnabin. His health continued to deteriorate, and about a year after being brought home he died, on November 11, 1976. Altogether he had been ill about 4 years, and he was 14 years old when he died.

U Khin Maung said that Maung Myint Lwin, as he was sinking toward death, appeared to realize that he was dying. On his last night he implored his father not to go out to work in the fields the next morning and kept asking: "Can't you save me?" Daw Than Shein said that Maung Myint Lwin was conscious up to the time of his death and died muttering: "Father! Mother!"

The Marking of Maung Myint Lwin's Body. Daw Than Shein said that she could not bear to see her son dying. So she asked a close neighbor, Daw Saw Myine, to mark his body. She remembered saying: "Please put it [the mark] on the body so that it would not be unsightly. Use the grease from the pots in the kitchen." After saying this, she sat down at a short distance from her dying son.

Daw Saw Myine told U Win Maung that she remembered marking Maung Myint Lwin's foot. As instructed by Daw Than Shein, she used the grease from

pots in the kitchen. She made the mark across the middle of the sole, not along its side. She could not remember (in 1981) whether she had marked the right or left foot. Daw Thoung told U Win Maung that she saw Daw Saw Myine putting the grease mark on the sole of Maung Myint Lwin; but she also could not remember whether the left or the right foot had been the one marked.

Maung Myint Thein (Maung Myint Lwin's older brother) told U Win Maung that he was about 16 years old when his brother died. He recalled that a neighbor in the group around the dying boy had marked his foot, but he did not remember who this had been. He did, however, say that he distinctly remembered that the mark had been put on the sole of Maung Myint Lwin's left foot. He said that he himself was sitting at this brother's head at the time. His brother was lying on a mat near a wall so that his left foot was more accessible for marking than the right one would have been. Maung Myint Thein made a sketch to show U Win Maung how his dying brother lay and where he himself was sitting in the room at the time. U Win Maung prepared Figure 10-35 from Maung Myint Thein's sketch.

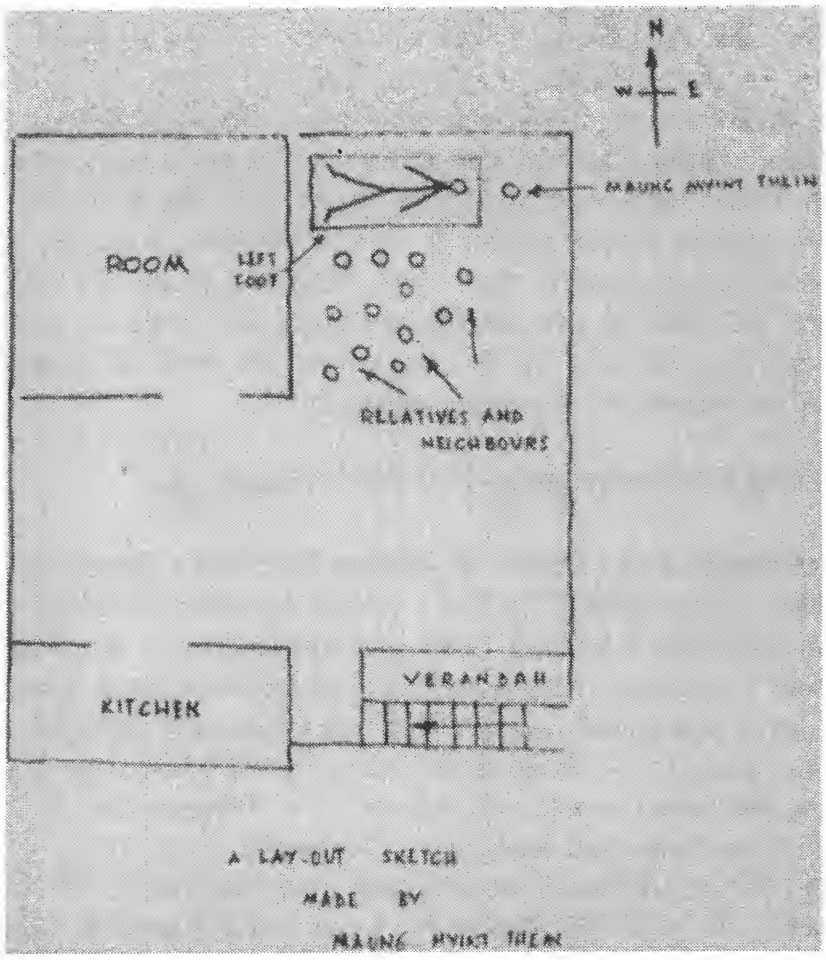

Figure 10-35 · Sketch by U Win Maung developed from a cruder drawing made by Maung Myint Thein to show how the dying Maung Myint Lwin lay on his bed with his left foot more accessible for someone wanting to mark it than his right foot would have been.

The witnesses to the marking agreed that Maung Myint Lwin's body was marked as he was dying and before he had died.

Statements and a Recognition Made by Maung Hla Win

Maung Hla Win said that he was called Hsami and had a home in Nyaungnabin. ("Hsami" was Maung Myint Lwin's nickname.) He mentioned the name of the mother of the previous life first: "Ma Than Shin." (To be correct for Maung Myint Lwin's mother, the second given name should be *Shein*, not *Shin*; but the two names are similar, and Maung Hla Win might not have been able to pronounce *Shein* distinctly. Maung Hla Win used the honorific *Ma*, perhaps because it was used more often than *Daw* for Daw Than Shein.) Some time later, Maung Hla Win also mentioned the previous father's name: "U Khin Maung."

Maung Hla Win said that he had had boils on the thigh "spread all over." He described going with his father and Daw Ngwe Yee for treatment at the hospital in Rangoon. (This was only half correct; Maung Myint Lwin's father and paternal grandmother took him to Rangoon. However, a member of the family was called Daw Ngwe Yee; she was Maung Myint Lwin's great-aunt on his mother's side.)

As I mentioned earlier, Maung Hla Win spontaneously recognized Nyaungnabin when he was a little more than 1 year old and happened to be passing by it. When Maung Hla Win was about 2 years old, Maung Myint Lwin's mother, Daw Than Shein, went to Ingone to see him. She took one of Maung Myint Lwin's younger brothers, Maung Myint Zaw Htun, with her. Maung Hla Win looked at them both intently. Daw Than Shein said he did this "as if trying to recall the past." However, he gave no sign of recognizing either her or her son.

So far as I know, Maung Hla Win has never been taken to Nyaungnabin and so has not had occasion to attempt recognitions there.

Maung Hla Win's Behavior Related to the Previous Life

Circumstances and Manner of Maung Hla Win's Speaking about the Previous Life. When Maung Hla Win's mother punished him for some misconduct when he was about 2, he said: "I am going back home. I am going home." It was at this time that, asked where home was, he mispronounced Nyaungnabin as *Nyaung-kar-yar*. He frequently asked his parents to take him there. He would say: "Put me on the train, and I can go to my home." Once when a car in which they were traveling had some trouble and stopped near Nyaungnabin, he tried to run away and had to be chased and brought back to the car.

Maung Hla Win's phase of wanting to go to Nyaungnabin did not last more than a few years. When U Win Maung and I met him in Ingone in 1984—he was almost 6 years old then—and asked him whether he still wanted to go to Nyaungnabin, he shook his head in a negative response.

Maung Hla Win's Phobia of Injections. When Maung Hla Win was a little under 2 years old, he became ill, and his mother consulted a doctor who pro-

posed to give him an injection. By this time he was able to speak, and he refused to have the injection saying: "It is very painful. I have had many injections in Rangoon." When a visiting health worker came to the village, he would hide himself under a pile of blankets on a bed. He continued to be phobic of injections up to the time of our meeting him in March 1984.[34]

Maung Hla Win's Shyness. Daw Than Shein observed that Maung Hla Win seemed to be "very shy." She said that Maung Myint Lwin had been "shy and a quiet boy."

Maung Hla Win's Birthmark

Figures 10-33 and 10-34 show Maung Hla Win's birthmark on the lateral side and sole of his left foot. It was a rectangular area of increased pigmentation approximately 6 centimeters long and 3 centimeters wide.

Other Relevant Medical Information

Maung Hla Win did not have a birthmark on his thigh. However, he was susceptible to furuncles on both thighs, particularly on the right one. In 1984 Daw Saw Shwe said that furuncles were developing on his thighs two or three times a year. An episode of furuncles on the right thigh had occurred about 2 months before our meeting that year. Maung Hla Win did not have furuncles on any other part of his body; and he was the only one of the five children of the family to have furuncles on the thighs.[35]

Other Information

Daw Than Shein said that Maung Hla Win was "very similar in appearance" to Maung Myint Lwin. She said that Daw Ohn Kyi had remarked to her on the similarity in appearance between the two children; but Daw Ohn Kyi did not include a comment about this in her statement to U Win Maung.

I mentioned earlier that by chance Daw Saw Shwe had carried a notice of Maung Myint Lwin's death from Nyaungnabin to Ingone. She told U Win Maung that as she approached Ingone village (carrying this notice) she "suddenly got the shivers near a big tamarind tree."

Comment. These last two items have no direct connection with each other. I have mentioned them, however, because they pertain to details deserving further

[34]Ma Choe Hnin Htet was another subject who remembered a previous life with a severe prolonged illness and much medical treatment; and she also had a phobia of doctors and injections.

[35]This observation suggests that the thighs of Maung Hla Win had become a *locus minoris resistentiae* for infections, perhaps through a communication from the body of Maung Myint Lwin, whose fatal illness had started in one thigh and ultimately affected both. I resume this topic in a later chapter.

study in new cases. In a later chapter I consider, with examples, the possibility that the face is a kind of birthmark whose form a previous life may influence.

The "shivers" that Daw Saw Shwe experienced when she was carrying the notice of Maung Myint Lwin's death may indicate the beginning of a kind of psychic attachment between the discarnate Maung Myint Lwin and her. This was not, however, close to the time of Maung Hla Win's conception, which did not occur until about 10 months later.

THE CASE OF MA ZIN MAR OO

Summary of the Case and Its Investigation

Ma Zin Mar Oo was born in Pattar village, Lewe Township, Upper Burma, on March 22, 1980. (U Win Maung examined her birth certificate.) She was the only child of her parents, U Po Hsai and Daw Nu. U Po Hsai was a cultivator.

Ma Zin Mar Oo had a prominent birthmark (Figures 10-36 and 10-37) on the anterior aspect of her left leg just superior to the foot. This was said to correspond to a mark made with soot at the same site on the body of a relative, U Kyaw Oo, as he was dying. U Kyaw Oo was a maternal uncle of U Po Hsai.[36] Daw Nu said that she dreamed of U Kyaw Oo before she became pregnant with Ma Zin Mar Oo, and this dream, together with Ma Zin Mar Oo's birthmark, encouraged members of the family to identify Ma Zin Mar Oo as the reincarnation of U Kyaw Oo.

This case came to the attention of U Win Maung early in 1981 through one of his relatives, U Kyauk Tin, a resident of Tatkon, who notified us about numerous cases. U Win Maung went almost immediately to Pattar village, on May 23, 1981. He recorded testimony from several witnesses concerning the marking of the dying U Kyaw Oo, and he photographed the birthmark on Ma Zin Mar Oo's leg. She was then only 14 months old and had not begun to speak.

Approximately 3 years later U Win Maung and I returned to Pattar village, where we obtained some additional testimony about the case and examined the birthmark again.

Up to the time of this second visit, on March 2, 1984, Ma Zin Mar Oo (who was then almost 4 years old) had said nothing about a previous life. She had, however, shown some unusual behavior that corresponded to that of U Kyaw Oo.

In June 1988, Daw Hnin Aye went to Pattar village, where, guided by some questions that I had sent her, she obtained additional information during interviews with Daw Nu and U Kyaw Oo's widow, Daw Sein. In the meantime,

[36]Daw Hnin Aye developed a genealogy that differed (with regard to this relationship) from that which U Win Maung had drawn up 4 years earlier. According to Daw Hnin Aye's genealogy, U Kyaw Oo's wife, Daw Sein, was a sister of U Po Hsai's mother. He was therefore U Po Hsai's maternal uncle by marriage. The difference is not important for this case, because an inherited nevus is not a plausible interpretation for Ma Zin Mar Oo's birthmark.

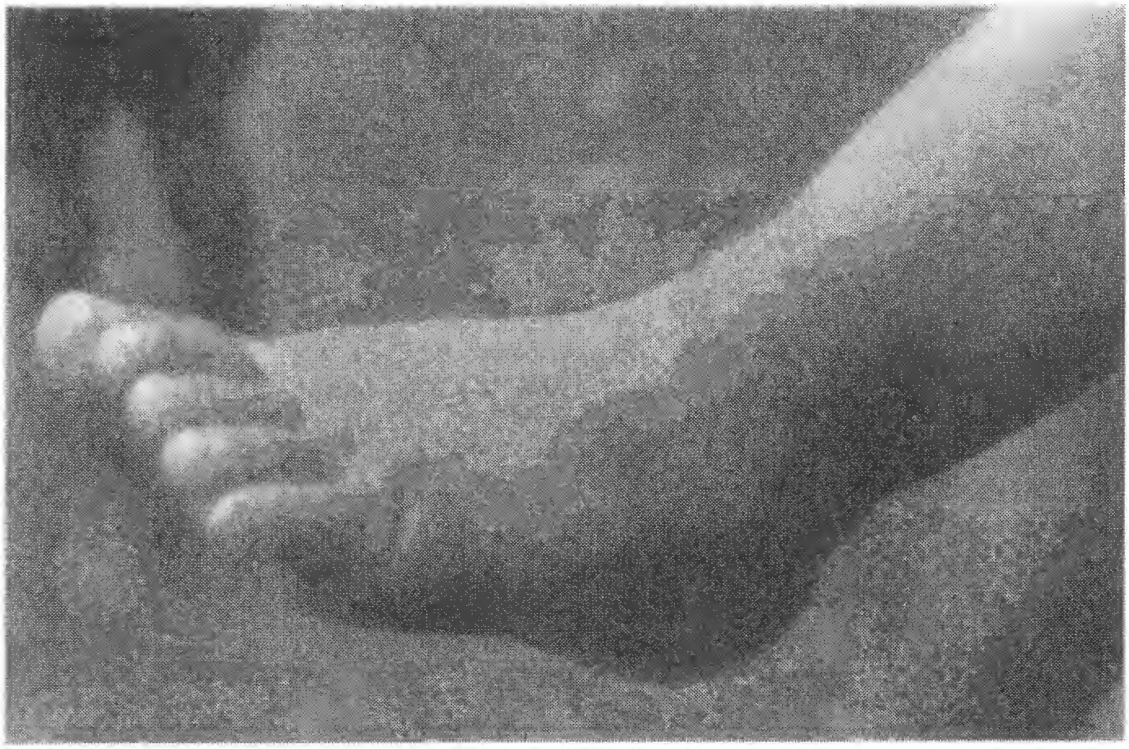

Figure 10-36 Birthmark of Ma Zin Mar Oo as it appeared in May 1981, when she was a little more than 1 year old. The birthmark was a band of hyperpigmentation about 3 centimeters wide extending almost entirely around the lower left leg just above the ankle.

Figure 10-37 Medial aspect of Ma Zin Mar Oo's left lower leg as it appeared in May 1981. The photograph shows that the birthmark extended around the front of the leg.

Ma Zin Mar Oo had spoken about memories of the life of U Kyaw Oo. Her birthmark had entirely faded by 1988.

Persons Interviewed during the Investigation

What I should call an interview we had only with Daw Nu, Ma Zin Mar Oo's mother, and with Daw Sein, U Kyaw Oo's widow.

In addition, however, U Win Maung recorded (in 1981) statements from three persons who, besides Daw Sein, had been present when U Kyaw Oo died and who saw Daw Sein mark his left ankle while he was dying. These persons were:

Daw Toke, U Kyaw Oo's daughter
Ma Khin Nwe, U Kyaw Oo's daughter
Daw Saw Nyunt, U Kyaw Oo's sister-in-law

The Life, Death, and Character of U Kyaw Oo

U Kyaw Oo was born in about 1919 in Kyee-ywa village, north of Pyawbwe, which is a town of Upper Burma about 90 kilometers north of Lewe. He was the oldest of three children. When he grew up, he married Daw Sein, and they had three children. (I listed two of them above as being present when their father died.) U Kyaw Oo worked as a crane operator.

At the age of about 60 he became paralyzed and was thought to have had a stroke. He lived for some days and died on September 1, 1979. (The date given by his widow, Daw Sein, was confirmed by an obituary notice that U Win Maung examined.)

The Marking of U Kyaw Oo's Body. Daw Sein's sister-in-law, Daw Saw Nyunt, told her that marking the body of a dying person would make it possible to recognize the person in the next life. So when it became clear that her husband was dying, Daw Sein put some of the greasy soot from the under surface of a cooking pot on her finger and smeared this in a line around the front of the left leg just above its junction with the foot. She remembered later that she did not extend the soot mark all the way around the leg, but made it only on the front part. Her two daughters, Daw Toke and Ma Khin Nwe, and her sister-in-law, Daw Saw Nyunt, all said that they had been present when Daw Sein made the mark with soot as described, on U Kyaw Oo's left ankle. Daw Toke said: "The dying person [her father, U Kyaw Oo] had his head toward the east. Mother [Daw Sein] marked the southern leg." From this description, U Win Maung drew the sketch of the scene at the time of the marking shown in Figure 10-38.

In sum, four persons testified to U Win Maung that Daw Sein had marked U Kyaw Oo on the left ankle before he died. (U Win Maung was unable to interview another person who was present; this was Maung Aung Soe, U Kyaw Oo's son.) U

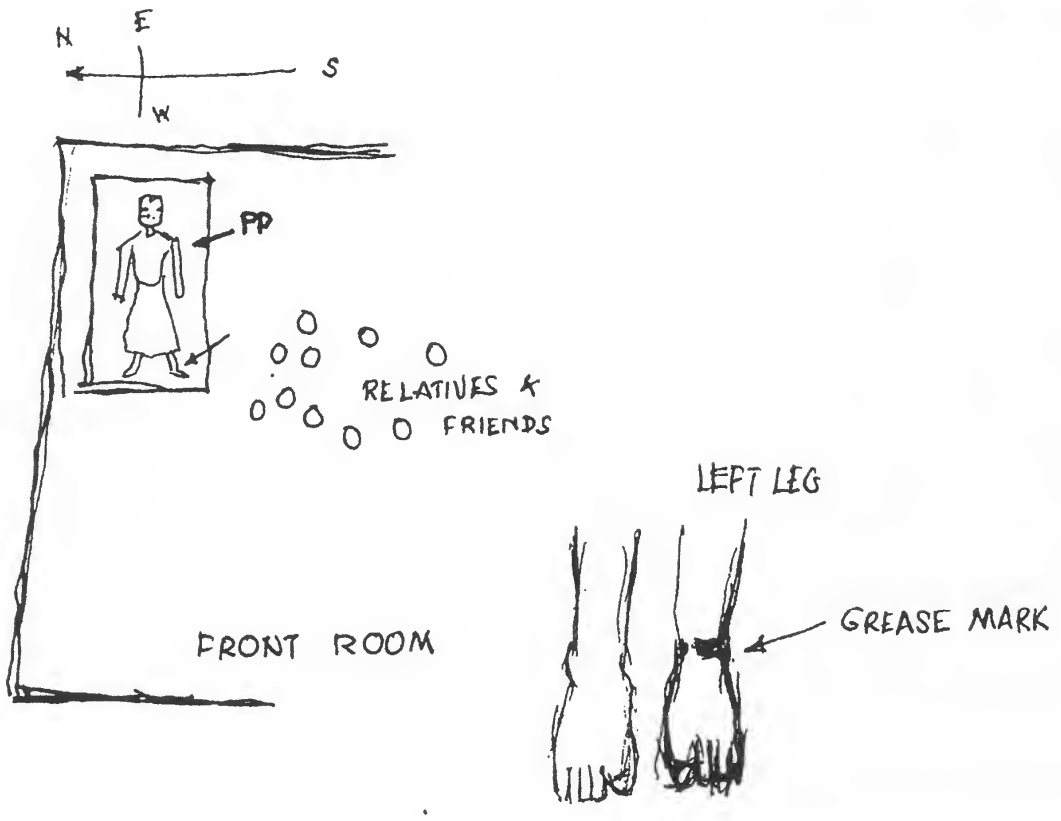

Figure 10-38 Sketch made by U Win Maung of the scene when Daw Sein marked the left leg of her dying husband, U Kyaw Oo. (PP stands for previous personality.)

Kyaw Oo seemed to be unconscious at the time Daw Sein marked him with the soot. He did not regain consciousness and died a few hours later.[37]

U Kyaw Oo's Character. I learned little about U Kyaw Oo's character. He smoked cheroots and drank too much alcohol. Both U Kyauk Tin and Daw Nu considered him an alcoholic. His widow, Daw Sein, said that he had stopped taking alcohol in the later years of his life. However, Daw Nu said he remained an addict of alcohol until he died, and it seems probable that Daw Sein was whitening her deceased husband.

He was pious and expected that he would be reborn as a man (not demoted to being a woman or an animal). He had not selected parents for his next terrestrial life. He and Daw Sein lived near to U Po Hsai and Daw Nu, and the two families were friendly.

[37]In 1981 Daw Sein said that her husband had lived for 5 days after his stroke, but in 1984 she said that he had been ill for 10 to 15 days before he died. These are not necessarily incompatible statements, because he might have been visibly ill for 10 days before he had the stroke.

Daw Sein also made different statements about the interval between the time she marked her husband's leg and his death. In 1981 she told U Win Maung that U Kyaw Oo had lived about 6 hours after she had marked his leg, but in 1984 she told us that he died 1 or 2 hours afterward.

Daw Nu's Announcing Dream

If the dates of death and birth in this case are accurate, and there is no reason to think they are not, Ma Zin Mar Oo was born less than 7 months after U Kyaw Oo's death. This, however, means that Daw Nu was pregnant before U Kyaw Oo had died. It means also that she was wrong in dating the dream she had to 1 or 2 months *before* she became pregnant. The dates on the written documents that U Win Maung examined are more likely to be correct than Daw Nu's memory of when she had the dream; she probably had it *after* she became pregnant.

In the dream, U Kyaw Oo came to their house wearing a white shirt and a white towel on his head. (A coiled towel is a common type of headdress among Burmese villagers.) He said: "I am staying with you. I am not going back." Daw Nu told him that he was not wanted in their family, but U Kyaw Oo persisted and said: "I am not dead. I am living with you." The next morning Daw Nu related the dream to her husband, U Po Hsai (U Kyaw Oo's nephew.)

Daw Nu explained to U Win Maung that she did not wish to have U Kyaw Oo as her child because she considered him an alcoholic. As mentioned, U Kyauk Tin shared this view of him.

Statements and a Recognition Made by Ma Zin Mar Oo

Ma Zin Mar Oo had begun to speak about the life of U Kyaw Oo when she was 4 years old, which would have been not long after the visit to Pattar village by U Win Maung and myself in March 1984. She said that she was "Kyaw Oo" and that "his" wife had marked "his" left ankle when "he" was unconscious.[38]

She pointed in the direction of U Kyaw Oo's house and stated that it was her house.

Ma Zin Mar Oo's Behavior Related to the Previous Life

Ma Zin Mar Oo's Attachment to U Kyaw Oo's Family. When she was 6 years old, Ma Zin Mar Oo went to Daw Sein's house and said that she wanted to stay there. She started to eat and sleep there until finally her mother beat her for this behavior. However, Daw Nu afterward relented to some extent, and in June 1988 she was allowing Ma Zin Mar Oo to visit Daw Sein and sometimes to stay overnight with her.

Ma Zin Mar Oo's Desire for Tobacco and Alcohol. Despite her young age in March 1984, Ma Zin Mar Oo had already shown a lively interest in alcohol and tobacco. When her father drank alcohol, she was observed to try to steal some of his drink from his cup. She had also snatched cheroots from persons who were

[38]The word *unconscious* occurs in Daw Hnin Aye's notes. I do not think a 4-year-old child is likely to have used this word. I believe that Ma Zin Mar Oo meant to say that U Kyaw Oo was dying when Daw Sein marked him.

smoking them, and she had taken cheroot stumps that had been thrown away and lit them at the kitchen fire.

In June 1988 Daw Hnin Aye learned that Ma Zin Mar Oo was still known to be smoking cheroots and drinking alcohol.

Ma Zin Mar Oo's Masculine Behavior. Ma Zin Mar Oo had not asked for boys' clothes and we learned of only one masculine trait that she had shown: She sometimes urinated standing up instead of sitting.

In June 1988 Daw Nu said that Ma Zin Mar Oo played in a rough fashion like a boy and was asking her mother to buy shirts for her.

Ma Zin Mar Oo's Birthmark

Ma Zin Mar Oo's birthmark (Figures 10-36 and 10-37) was a large area of hyperpigmentation that extended almost, but not completely, around the lower part of the left leg just above the ankle. Its distinctive feature was its shape: a symmetrical band running around the front and sides of the lower left leg just above its junction with the foot. It was about 3 centimeters wide.

Daw Nu said that no other member of the family had any birthmarks—either at the site of Ma Zin Mar Oo's or elsewhere.

In the 3 years between U Win Maung's photograph of the birthmark in 1981 and our examination of it in 1984, it had definitely faded. I am unable to demonstrate this with a photograph because Ma Zin Mar Oo became frightened when I approached her, and she would not remain sufficiently immobile for a satisfactory photograph.

In 1988 Daw Hnin Aye examined Ma Zin Mar Oo's left leg and found that the birthmark had entirely faded.

Comment

This case has several features that make it evidentially stronger than many of the other cases of experimental birthmarks. First, three persons corroborated in detail the main witness with regard to the place where she had marked the dying U Kyaw Oo; second, U Win Maung began investigating the case when Ma Zin Mar Oo was barely 1 year old; and third, the mark made and the related birthmark are both unusual in size, shape, and location. I do not think the large hyperpigmented macules that are said to occur where they do "by chance" ever have the unusual elongated shape of Ma Zin Mar Oo's. I certainly have never seen another one of that shape.

SOME SALIENT FEATURES OF SIX ADDITIONAL CASES

The following six cases were studied in a preliminary way by Daw Hnin Aye in Burma. I have not met any of the subjects of these cases. Along with the photographs of the birthmarks I give a few lines about salient features of each case.

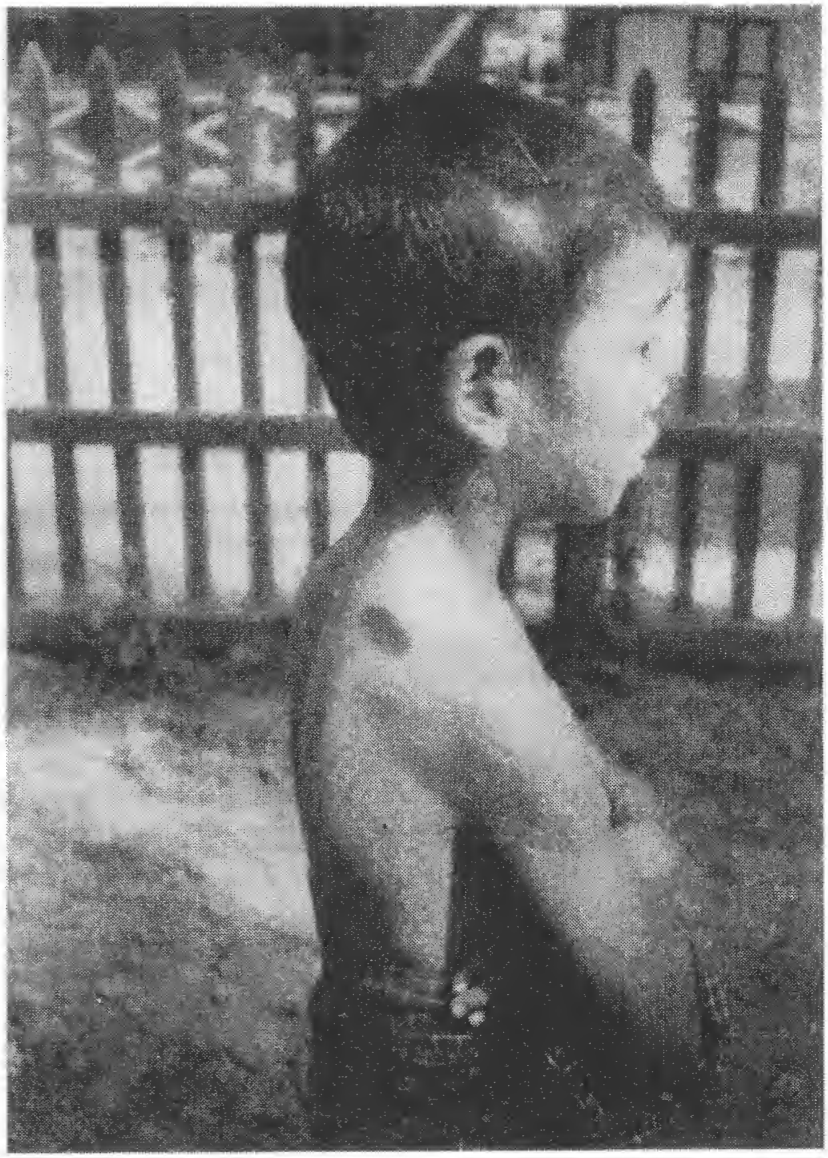

Figure 10-39 Birthmarks on Maung Myint Khine as they appeared in July 1985, when he was about 10 years old. There was a large black hyperpigmented macule on the right shoulder. This corresponded to the site marked on the previous personality. A hairless area in the right temporal region was said to correspond to a fatal blow on the head from a log that fell on the previous personality.

THE CASE OF MAUNG MYINT KHINE

The marking and the birthmark (Figure 10-39) were on the posterior aspect of the right shoulder. Maung Myint Khine had a second birthmark—a hairless area in the right temporal region, also seen in Figure 10-39—which he said derived from his being hit on the head and fatally injured in the previous life, when a log struck him as he was engaged in lumbering work. The previous personality had died in this way at the age of about 45 years. He was the brother of the subject's maternal grandmother.

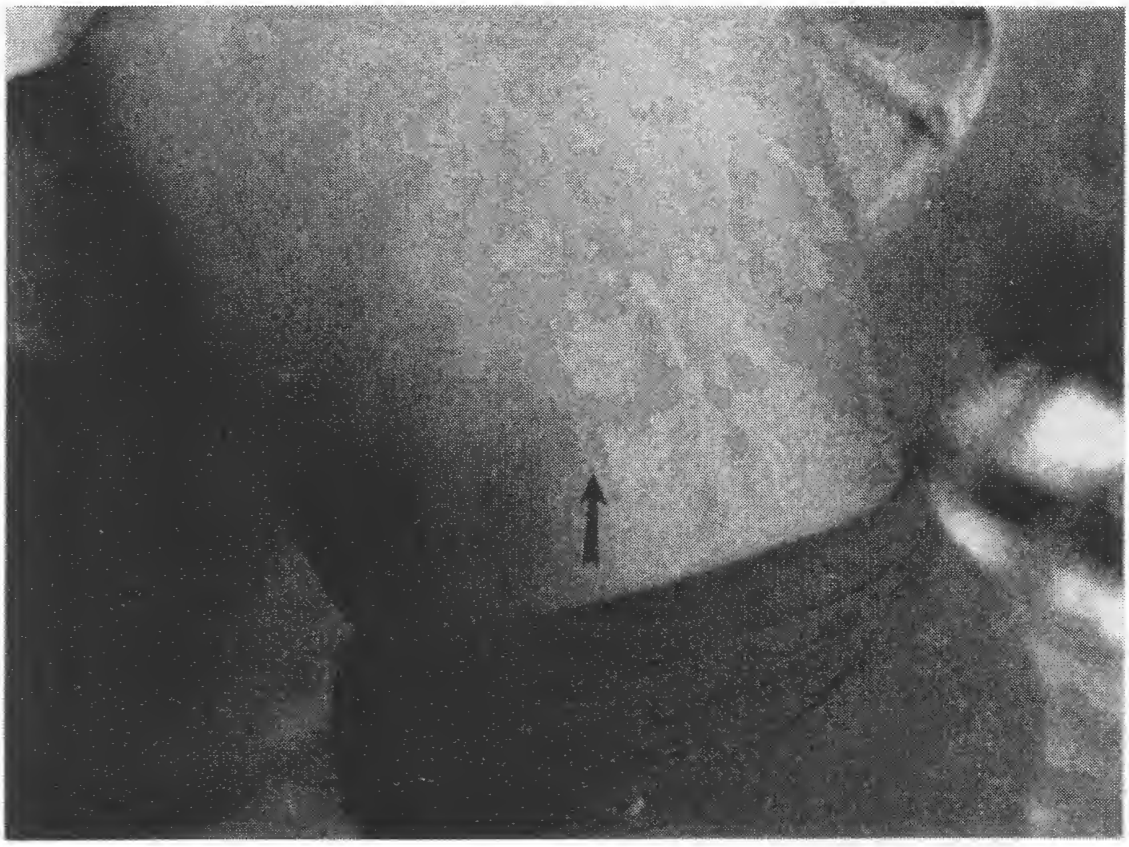

Figure 10-40 Birthmark on Ma Moe Moe Than as it appeared in December 1984, when she was about 8 years old. The birthmark was a hyperpigmented macule on the left lower back.

THE CASE OF MA MOE MOE THAN

The person marked in this case was a 17-year-old youth, who died when an intractable hemorrhage from his nose could not be arrested. (Daw Hnin Aye did not learn the cause of the bleeding.) The marking and the birthmark were on the lower left back (Figure 10-40). The informant stated that after the death and marking of the youth, a baby boy in an unrelated family of the same village was born having a birthmark at the site of the marking. This baby died in infancy before it had learned to speak. After its death the principal subject, Ma Moe Moe Than, was born with a birthmark at the site of the marking on the first deceased person and that of the birthmark on the deceased "intermediate" infant. This child, when it could speak, remembered the name of the deceased and marked youth, but not that of the "intermediate" baby. She was, however, strongly attracted to the family of the "intermediate" baby, who adopted her.

Comment. In this case a birthmark appears to have passed through an intermediate life and manifested on a third body. I discuss this possibility in Chapter 14.

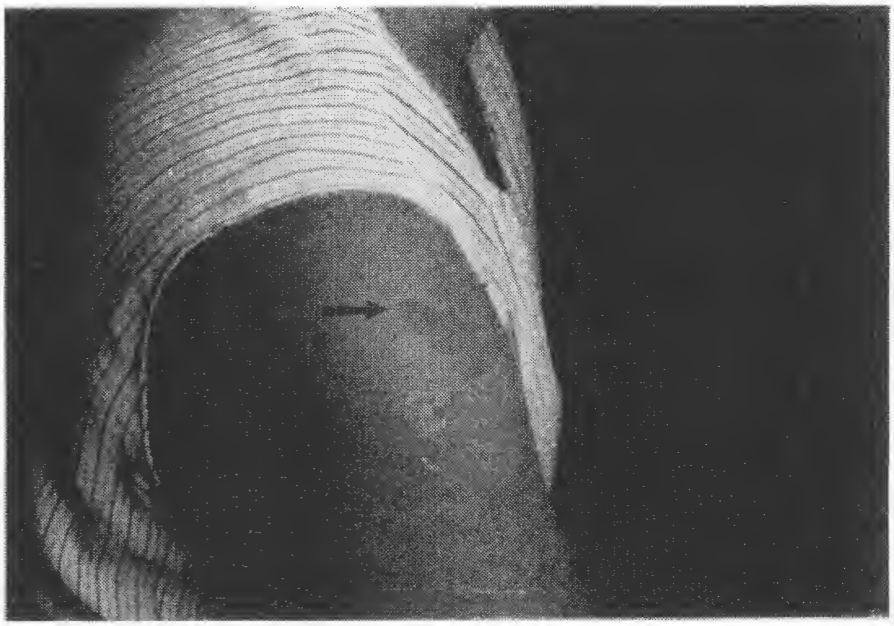

Figure 10-41 Birthmark on the right shoulder of Ma Tin Aung as it appeared in January 1985, when she was about 18 years old. The birthmark was a round hyperpigmented macule, about 1 centimeter in diameter.

Figure 10-42 Birthmark on the left shoulder of Ma Tin Aung photographed at the same time as that in Figure 10-41. This birthmark was also a hyperpigmented macule of about the same size as the one on the right shoulder. It was slightly more prominent than the other birthmark.

THE CASE OF MA TIN AUNG

The person marked in this case was a woman 79 years of age whose death, after an illness lasting 10 days, was attributed to "old age." Marks were placed at

the same site on both her shoulders. Figure 10-41 shows a hyperpigmented macule on the subject's right shoulder, and Figure 10-42 shows a similar macule on her left shoulder.

THE CASE OF MAUNG KYAW MIN

The marking and the birthmark were on the left leg at the ankle (Figure 10-43). Maung Kyaw Min did not speak at all until he was 3 years old. The informant for the case attributed his delay in speaking to the last illness of the previous personality; he had had a stroke and become speechless before dying 10 days later.

Figure 10-43 Birthmark on left ankle of Maung Kyaw Min as it appeared in August 1985, when he was about 7 years old. The birthmark was a hyperpigmented macule, generally round in shape and about 1.5 centimeters in diameter. The dark circle (probably made with ink) surrounding the birthmark was intended to indicate the birthmark's location; it was not part of the birthmark.

Figure 10-44 Birthmark on Maung Tin Ngwe as it appeared in September 1985, when he was about 36 years old. The birthmark was a hyperpigmented, slightly elevated and hairy nevus.

THE CASE OF MAUNG TIN NGWE

In this case the previous personality's husband, who was a practitioner of indigenous medicine, tattooed his dying wife on the back of the left thigh, where the subject had a prominent birthmark, a melanocytic nevus (Figure 10-44). The previous personality died after a brief illness (not specified) at the age of about 40.

THE CASE OF MA KHIN NYO HTWE

The person marked in this case, a woman, died after a prolonged illness (not specified) at the age of about 35. The woman who marked the dead body placed the mark between the eyebrows, where the subject had a prominent birthmark (Figure 10-45). Elders sitting near the corpse rebuked the woman for marking with black soot. She then wiped the mark, but instead of washing it off with soap and water she only smeared it around, and the coffin was closed with the mark still present.[39]

[39]A similar and equally futile attempt to wipe away a mark that had been made occurred in the case of Ma Chit Chit Than. In her case the marking substance was red medicine accidentally spilled on the face of a dying child.

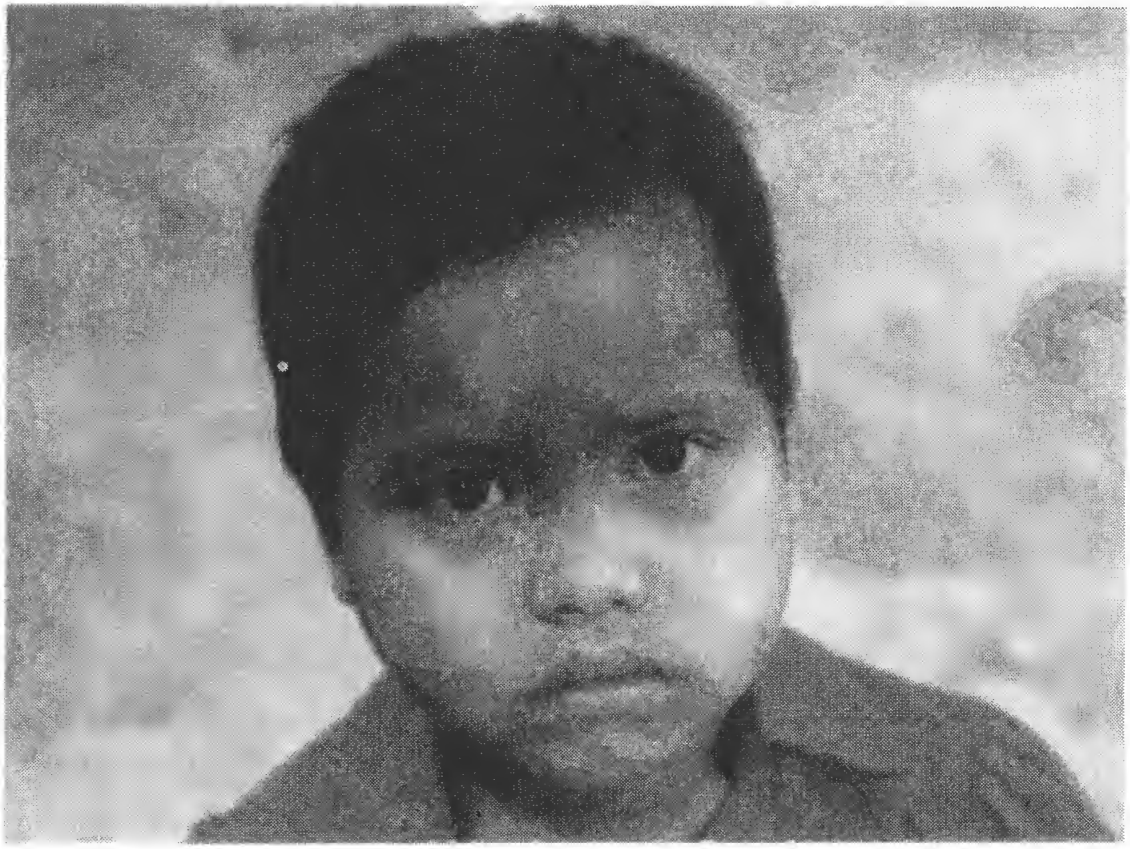

Figure 10-45 Birthmark on Ma Khin Nyo Htwe as it appeared in January 1985, when she was about 7 years old. The birthmark was a large hyperpigmented macule between the eyebrows, extending onto the nose and forehead.

DISCUSSION OF EXPERIMENTAL BIRTHMARKS

Before discussing the strength of the evidence for experimental birthmarks, I shall first summarize some of the main features of the cases we have investigated.

Summary of Main Features of Cases with Experimental Birthmarks

In Table 10-4 I have listed the main features of these cases. To the 12 cases described in this chapter I have added 2 cases described in other parts of this work (Ma Khin Sandi and Ma Win Win Nyunt) and the 6 cases investigated (less thoroughly) by Daw Hnin Aye (but not by myself). These additions enable us to consider 20 cases altogether.

Only 4 of the cases occurred in Thailand, and in 3 of them some red-colored substance was used for marking the previous personality. In Burma, charcoal or soot from beneath a cooking pot was used except for the trial with lipstick in the case of Ma Choe Hnin Htet and a tattoo in the case of Maung Tin Ngwe.

Birthmarks of different degrees of pigmentation corresponded to marks made with the same substance. For example, in the cases of Anurak Sithipan and Ma

Table 10-4. **Main Features of 20 Experimental Birthmark Cases**

Subject	*Sex of S*	*Sex of PP*	*Relationship of PP to S*	*Relationship of Person Making Mark to PP*	*Substance Used for Marking*	*Color of Birthmark*	*Was PP Dying or Dead When Marked?*	*Did S Give Name of Marking Person?*	*Comments*
1. Ampan Petcherat	F	M	None	Great-aunt	Red ochre	Brown	Dead		Sex change.
2. Kim Sripayak	F	F	Sibling	Mother	Red lime	Light brown	Dead		
3. Daw Tin Yee	F	F	Great-aunt	Daughter-in-law	Soot from cooking pot	Dark brown	Dying		
4. Maung Tin Tun	M	F	Unsolved case	Husband	Soot from cooking pot	Dark brown, almost black	Dying	Yes	Sex change. Unverified.
5. Ma Myat Myat Htwe	F	M	Unsolved case	Father	Charcoal	Dark brown	Dying	Yes	Sex change. Unverified.
6. U Myat Htun	M	M	Grandfather	Grand-daughter	Soot from cooking pot	Brown	Dead	Yes	
7. Ma Sanda Win	M	F	Sibling	Cousin	Charcoal	Brown	Dying (?)		Sex change.
8. Anurak Sithipan	M	M	Sibling	Adoptive uncle	Charcoal	Dark brown, black in center	Dead		

9. Lipone Yangkhoonchow	M	M	Sibling	Grandmother	Red lime	Light brown	Dead		
10. Ma Choe Hnin Htet	F	F	Aunt	Close friend	Red lipstick	Red	Dead (2 days)		
11. Maung Hla Win	M	M	Member extended family	Friend of mother	Soot from cooking pot	Brown	Dying		
12. Ma Zin Mar Oo	F	M	Great-uncle	Wife	Soot from cooking pot	Brown	Dying	Yes	Sex change.
13. Ma Khin Sandi	F	F	Grandmother	Not known	Not known	Brown	Dead		
14. Ma Win Win Nyunt	M	F	Sibling	Servant	Charcoal	Not seen by investigators	Dead		Sex change. Verified at second hand.
15. Maung Myint Khine	M	M	Great-uncle	Mother-in-law	Grease	Black	Dead		Verified at second hand.
16. Ma Moe Moe Than	F	M	Uncle	Mother	Soot from cooking pot	Brown	Dead		Sex change. Verified at second hand.

S = Subject
PP = Previous Personality

Table 10-4 *(continued)*

Subject	*Sex of S*	*Sex of PP*	*Relationship of PP to S*	*Relationship of Person Making Mark to PP*	*Substance Used for Marking*	*Color of Birthmark*	*Was PP Dying or Dead When Marked?*	*Did S Give Name of Marking Person?*	*Comments*
17. Ma Tin Aung	F	F	Great-grand-mother	Younger sister	Grease from frying pan	Dark brown	Dead		Verified at second hand.
18. Maung Kyaw Min	M	M	Grandfather	Daughter-in-law	Soot from cooking pot	Black	Dead		
19. Maung Tin Ngwe	M	F	Acquainted, not related	Husband	Tattoo	Black	Dying		Sex change. Verified at second hand.
20. Ma Khin Nyo Htwe	F	F	Mother's half-sister	Half-sister	Soot from cooking pot	Dark brown	Dead		

Sanda Win charcoal was the marking substance, but Anurak's birthmark was deeply pigmented (almost black in its center) whereas Ma Sanda Win's was brown.

In 7 cases the previous personality was marked when he or she was judged to be close to dying, but still alive. In 12 cases informants said that the previous personality was marked after death had occurred. In 1 case (Ma Sanda Win's) informants gave discrepant testimony on this point.

In all but 3 of the verified cases subject and previous personality belonged to the same immediate or slightly extended family. In 1 of the exceptional cases (Maung Hla Win) they were members of an extended family by marriage. In 5 cases they were siblings.

The person making the mark was nearly always a member of the family, although sometimes the member closest to the dying person, such as a mother, asked another person to do the marking.

Four of the subjects remembered the person who had marked the previous personality and gave that person's name. Other subjects may have identified the marking persons in their cases without our learning about this from informants. The detail is an impressive one, however, and I think informants would probably have remembered if the subject had identified the marking person to them. Nevertheless, before we credit such a statement as showing paranormally obtained information, we must be reasonably confident that the subject did not learn normally who had marked the previous personality, an item of information that can easily reach the subject in same-family cases, as nearly all of these are.

In 2 cases—possibly more, but we know of these 2—a baby without a birthmark was born in the family between the previous personality's death and the subject's birth. This sequence occurred in the cases of Anurak Sithipan and Lipone Yangkhoonchow.

In 1 case (Ma Moe Moe Than) the informant believed that a birthmark at the site of the marking occurred on an "intermediate" baby, who died. Afterward, a second baby was born having a birthmark at the same site.

Appraisal of the Evidence in Experimental Birthmark Cases

Under this heading I will first remark that we have almost no knowledge of occasions when dying and dead persons have been marked and no corresponding birthmark occurred. I have learned of one failure and one doubtful instance. One occurred in the case of Ma Choe Hnin Htet when Ma Lai Lai Way's friends, while preparing her body for burial, tried to touch up a tiny mole that she had had on her upper lip with eyebrow blacking. (This was additional to marking the back of the neck with lipstick.) Ma Choe Hnin Htet had no birthmark on her upper lip. In the case of Ma Hla Ngwe (Chapter 9) the younger sister of the deceased Daw Nyunt Tin made a mark on her abdomen near a birthmark that she had had. As I mentioned in the report of that case, we cannot say definitely whether the hyperpigmented macule on Ma Hla Ngwe's abdomen corresponded to a similar macule on Daw Nyunt Tin, to the experimental mark made on Daw Nyunt Tin's body, or to both.

We can set against such obvious failures other cases where we may know of a success, but the persons concerned in the related marking do not. If we take the cases of Maung Tin Tun and Ma Myat Myat Htwe at face value, we can imagine that the persons concerned in marking their previous personalities must have thought they had failed in their endeavor. The marked persons had, from their perspective, disappeared without trace; for our subjects, however, the marking had been a success. From these considerations we are clearly not in a position to give any score for successes and failures in experimental birthmarks.

The birthmarks figuring in these cases are nearly all large compared with hyperpigmented macules that are said to occur "by chance" on many persons. Yet macules as large as most of the ones in these cases do seem to occur sometimes "by chance," as a study of textbooks and atlases of dermatology has taught me. The birthmarks of Maung Hla Win, Ma Zin Mar Oo, Ma Khin Nyo Htwe, Daw Tin Yee, and Anurak Sithipan were larger than most of those ordinarily illustrated in the texts; the others were not.

Considered out of their context, the location of the birthmarks also provides little guidance in their appraisal. We have no base data from which we could state a probability for the occurrence of a birthmark at a particular site of the body. Pack, Lenson, and Gerber (1952) studied the regional distribution of moles (nevi) in 1,000 patients and found that they occur almost twice as frequently in the upper extremities as in the lower extremities. From this finding the cases of Maung Hla Win and Ma Zin Mar Oo gain some additional strength. Nevertheless, we are quite unable to attach any figure to the probability of a nevus occurring in a particular site, or even a particular region of the body.

These cases, however, occur within a context of close family relationships leading to the hope and expectation that the person marked will be reborn *in the same family* and be recognized on returning by a birthmark at the site where the deceased person was marked. For the persons concerned in the marking the issue is not the probability of just anyone having a birthmark at that site. If they think about the matter in terms of probability, they ask what the chances are that some member *of their family* will have a birthmark at the site marked. Informants give a straightforward answer to this question, which is that no other member of the family has a birthmark at the site of the subject's.[40]

I am confident that in the cases I have described no other member of the subject's family did have a birthmark at the site of the subject's birthmark corresponding to the mark placed on the identified deceased person. (The birthmarks on Anurak Sithipan's brother and sister may be exceptions.) Thus there appears to

[40]I can find in our notes that we asked and had this specific question answered in only 8 of the 12 principal cases of this section. In the other cases the answer was implicit in the informants' having identified the subject with the previous personality mainly because of his or her birthmark. They would not have done this if any other member of the family (besides the subject and previous personality) had had a similar birthmark. To be sure, an announcing dream, the child's statements, and its behavior variously added evidence supporting the identification; the birthmark, however, was usually the most important feature leading to that conclusion.

be no factor other than the marking of the dead person's body by which we can account for the subject's birthmark.

The subject is often the child of the same mother as the deceased person who was marked, and such cases may be open to the interpretation of a maternal impression on the fetus during gestation. The possibility of normal knowledge of the marking (and hence of maternal impression as an interpretation of the birthmark) exists also in cases in which the subject and previous personality are members of the same extended family (as in Ma Zin Mar Oo's case) or residents of the same village (as in Ma Moe Moe Than's case). In several cases, however—those of Ampan Petcherat, Ma Choe Hnin Htet, Maung Hla Win, and Ma Win Win Nyunt—the subject's mother had no knowledge of the marking of the dead person's body.

Reincarnation as an explanation for the birthmark receives additional support in those cases with other features, such as those in which the subject had imaged memories of the previous life, showed unusual behavior appropriate for the life remembered, or had a second birthmark corresponding to a wound or birthmark on the deceased person. Ma Choe Hnin Htet belongs in the group with two birthmarks, and so does Ma Khin Sandi, whose case I described in Chapter 7.

My confidence that the birthmark is unique in the subject's family and corresponds to the mark made on the deceased person does not mean that I have never had doubts about what the informants have told me. Self-deception may occur in those cases in which the baby with a birthmark is a younger sibling of a child who died in infancy. In such cases the parents, still grieving for the dead child and overjoyed at the birth of a new baby, may ardently wish to believe that he or she is the previous infant reborn to them. Noticing a birthmark on the new baby, they may think they remember marking the dead infant at the same place when perhaps they marked it elsewhere or did not even mark it at all.

A mistake in memory is not likely to occur—in sibling cases—when the baby with the birthmark is born within a year or two of the dead infant's death. This explanation also does not seem satisfactory when the baby with the birthmark is not born next in the family after the marked infant's death, but is a later-born younger sibling, as in the cases of Lipone Yangkhoonchow and Anurak Sithipan. Nor does this explanation adequately account for the cases in which the family of the subject having the birthmark has known nothing about the marking of the dead person concerned, which was true in the cases of Ma Choe Hnin Htet, Ampan Petcherat, Maung Hla Win, and Ma Win Win Nyunt. I think we can also exclude errors of memory in the cases, such as those of Maung Hla Win and Ma Zin Mar Oo, in which we have obtained statements about the marking from several witnesses of it.

Can We Obtain Stronger Evidence of Experimental Birthmarks?

We know, in principle, the requirements for stronger evidence than what we obtained in the cases I have described. They would include careful recording of all the details of site, time, and method in the marking of the dead person's body, and

even photography of the corpse after it had been marked. We tried to implement a program with this kind of rigor in Sri Lanka. One of my associates there, Tissa Jayawardene, persuaded four mourning families to mark the bodies of children who had just died (between 1982 and 1987). Tissa Jayawardene made careful notes of the details of the marking and photographed the marks after they had been made. The records were then sent to the University of Virginia, and we awaited the births of further children in these families. In one family a baby was born about 1 year after the death of the marked child. The new baby was of a different sex, and although it had a birthmark, this was not at the site where its sibling had been marked.

Although I think that this project may provide better evidence in cases of experimental birthmarks, it has two defects, one remediable, the other perhaps not.

The first limitation is that cases in which the subject and previous personality are siblings or otherwise members of the same family are extremely rare in Sri Lanka (Stevenson, 1977). Sinhalese parents seem not to expect (however much they may hope) that their children who die in infancy and childhood will be reborn to them. These facts may mean also that a Sinhalese person who dies and survives death may not expect to be reborn in the same family, and this belief may influence later events. A project of this kind would have a better chance of success in a culture where same-family cases are the rule rather than the exception. Peoples in this group include the Igbo of Nigeria, the Burmese, the Gitksan of British Columbia, and the Tlingit of Alaska.

The possibly irremediable objection to the project for improving evidence in cases of experimental birthmarks is that the attempt to do so may neutralize all the natural emotions and other elements that are probably essential for the occurrence of such birthmarks. The witnessing of the mourning parents' grief by strangers (the investigators), the formal, unspontaneous marking of the body, and the photography of the marked body may do more than merely inhibit the natural emotions; they betray a possibly damaging skepticism. Belief appears to be an important element associated with most paranormal phenomena; doubts tend to suppress them. It is one thing for grieving families to make their own experiments, but a different one for us as investigators to add our layer of experimenting to theirs. I am therefore inclined to base our hope for better evidence in cases of experimental birthmarks on efforts to reach earlier the scenes of cases that have developed spontaneously. U Win Maung gave us an example of this by finding and studying the case of Ma Zin Mar Oo when she was just a little more than 1 year old.

From the cases my associates and I have observed I am able to offer some advice that may be helpful to persons engaged in spontaneous experimental marking of a deceased person. They should not put their mark near an existing birthmark or other abnormality of the skin. (This was the mistake made in the case of Ma Hla Ngwe.) They also should not mark the back of the neck, where nuchal nevi occur in many babies. In addition, they might make the marks in unusual shapes and in places where hyperpigmented macules rarely occur. The cases of Maung Hla Win and Ma Zin Mar Oo are models for this kind of marking. Dr.

Jürgen Keil has investigated a case of an experimental birthmark in Thailand in which the birthmark (on the subject's arm) has an unusual appearance and looks as if someone had stroked the arm with some dark substance, using three separated fingers; and informants for the case have said that the deceased baby of whom the subject is said to be the reincarnation was marked on the arm with ash.

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11

Changes in the Appearance and Relative Location of Birthmarks

Numerous informants for these cases have mentioned that between the time of a subject's birth and that of our observations a birthmark had changed in appearance or relative location. The fading of birthmarks seems particularly important, because some birthmarks do not fade with increasing age of the subject, and a few even become more prominent. These differences provide additional evidence showing the contribution of the subject's skin to the birthmark.

THE FADING OF BIRTHMARKS

Among the reported changes in the appearance of birthmarks, that of a partial or complete fading is the most frequent. In preceding chapters of this work I have drawn attention to reports of the fading of birthmarks in numerous cases: Yvonne Ehrlich, Daw Aye Than, Navalkishore Yadav, Maung Win Aung, Necip Ünlütaşkıran, and Ma Sanda Win are only a few subjects of these cases.

I next present the report of a case in which one birthmark (corresponding to a bullet wound of entry) persisted into middle adulthood while a second (corresponding to a wound of exit) faded completely away. After this case I describe four cases in which a birthmark disappeared entirely (or almost entirely) during the years of our observations. (I have already described one case of this type, that of Ma Zin Mar Oo.) Two of these four cases have other features that warrant inclusion of full reports of them elsewhere in this work; but I give the full reports of the other two cases in this section. A sixth case—of the fading of birthmarks while we were

observing them—is that of Bhopal Singh, whose case I report in detail in the section of this chapter concerned with the relative movement of birthmarks.

THE CASE OF FRANK DUDLEY

Summary of the Case and Its Investigation

Frank Dudley was born in Haines, Alaska, on February 14, 1914. His parents were Ernest Willis and his wife, Margaret. Ernest Willis died when Frank was 9 years old. Margaret then married Henry Dudley, who adopted Frank, and Frank assumed the surname of Dudley. Frank was a full-blooded Tlingit. He was a gifted Indian craftsman and worked, at least in the years when I first knew him, as a carver of totem poles.

At about the time Frank Dudley was born, his mother had an impression (not a dream) that he should be given the name of Dadtookuch, who had been one of her mother's relatives. She noted that Frank had a birthmark on the skin of his throat when he was born; and he also had a red area at the top of the head.

I first met Frank Dudley in Klukwan, Alaska, on August 10, 1965. He was an informant for some other Tlingit cases and, in the course of our meeting, told me about his own case. I recorded a statement from him about it and also one from his mother, Margaret Dudley. (She was born in 1893.) Subsequently, I had two further interviews with Frank Dudley and his mother in 1972 and 1973. In the middle of the 1970s Frank Dudley moved from Klukwan to Haines, Alaska, where I met him again in September 1978.

When I met Margaret Dudley in 1965 and 1973, at Klukwan, her son acted as her interpreter. My interview with her in 1972 took place at Mt. Edgecumbe Hospital, Sitka, where she was then a patient. She spoke some English, but preferred to speak Tlingit, and so another patient interpreted for her.

Margaret Dudley and her son Frank agreed on all major points of their account of Frank's case, except for the exact relationship between Dadtookuch, the presumed previous personality of the case, and Margaret Dudley. I shall therefore combine the information from most of their statements. However, I shall later consider separately the question of the previous personality's place in the family genealogy.

When I first met Frank Dudley, he was 51 years old, and his imaged memories of the previous life had faded. He remembered what he had said about it when younger and perhaps also what adults had told him he had said earlier.

Statements Made by Frank Dudley and Their Verification

Frank's family paid no attention to his birthmarks until, at the age of between 2 and 3, he began to talk about a previous life. He pointed to his throat and said that he had been shot there. He said he had been shot from below and by a long gun. This last item was an apparent allusion to guns with barrels much

longer than those used later, at the time when Frank was first speaking about the previous life. Margaret Dudley did not recall that Frank had said he was shot from below. (This item came from Frank only, remembering what he had said when young.) She did, however, remember that he pointed to his birthmark and said that he was shot there with a long gun; and she recalled also that he had said the bullet went through his head.

When Frank began to make these remarks, Margaret Dudley mentioned them to her mother, and she examined the birthmark on Frank's throat. She then said "My uncle" and burst into tears. She recognized the correspondence between the birthmark on Frank's throat and the fatal wound that had killed her uncle Dadtookuch. Margaret Dudley had not been born when Dadtookuch was killed; and she seems not even to have heard about his wound before this scene. She obviously knew his name, however, or she would not have called her son after him. She seemed to have known, or to have remembered, little else about him. Her mother, on the other hand, had been a girl of about 18 when Dadtookuch was killed, and she had either firsthand knowledge of his wound or apparently reliable secondhand information.

Margaret Dudley's mother told the family some additional details about Dadtookuch's death. He had been the leader of a war party that had taken over part of another clan's territory. Dadtookuch's party built a fort on a river and thought they would be secure there. Dadtookuch then rather rashly walked along the top of the fort. His clan's enemies stealthily approached the edge of the fort without being seen and shot at him from below.

According to Frank Dudley, the fort where Dadtookuch had been killed was the Kingfisher Fort, which was located about 8 kilometers up the Chilkat River from Haines. In the 19th century, the river was tidal up to the forest, although it is no longer so. A boat conveying warriors could thus come up to the fort on the water.

The Relationship between Frank Dudley and Dadtookuch

Dadtookuch—he had only a Tlingit name, not a Christian one—was related to Margaret Dudley's mother. In 1965 Margaret Dudley described him loosely as her mother's "cousin." She said that he had been killed when her mother was a girl of 18. In 1972 she said that he was her mother's "brother." Frank Dudley, however, said that Dadtookuch was Margaret Dudley's mother's maternal uncle, and thus his own great-great uncle. This more distant relationship seems to me to accord better with the other statements about Dadtookuch that Margaret Dudley's mother made. It would place the death of Dadtookuch around 1870-1880, a period when Tlingit clans were still warring with each other, building forts, and using long-barreled rifles.[1] By the time of the following generation, the Tlingit had become more peaceful.

[1]I have previously given some information about clan fights among the Tlingit (Stevenson, 1966/1974b), especially in my reports of the cases of Charles Porter and Derek Pitnov. Krause (1885/1956) included details about feuds and warring among the Tlingit during the 19th century.

Figure 11-1 Birthmark on the inferior surface of Frank Dudley's chin as it appeared in 1978, when he was 64 years old. The birthmark was a roundish area of puckered and slightly hyperpigmented skin about 1.5 centimeters in diameter.

Whether Dadtookuch was Margaret Dudley's maternal uncle or her great-uncle, he was related to Frank Dudley on his (Frank's) mother's side. In this respect, the case is typical of Tlingit cases, in the majority of which the subject is related to the previous personality on the mother's side.[2]

Frank Dudley's Birthmark

Frank Dudley said that when he first spoke about the previous life and pointed to his birthmark on his throat, it was black. Later it faded. Figure 11-1 shows a roundish area of puckered and slightly hyperpigmented skin on the inferior surface of the chin, near the midline. The birthmark had the appearance of a healed wound. The area affected was about 1.5 centimeters in diameter and generally round in shape.

[2]Among 43 Tlingit cases that I analyzed, the two personalities concerned in a case were related on the side of the subject's mother in 30 (70%) (Stevenson, 1966).

On a visit to Anchorage in 1972, I happened to meet, under circumstances that I do not now remember, a young woman member of the Dudley family. She was Betty Wesley, who was 23 years old when we met. She said she was Margaret Dudley's granddaughter. She offered some thirdhand information about Frank Dudley's case. She said that Frank's half-brother, Walter Dudley, had told her that when Frank Dudley was a baby, and before he could speak, he would clutch his throat as if having pain there. His family thought this odd behavior might derive from some residue of a previous life, but they could make no sense of it until Frank began to say that he had been shot at the place in his neck that he had been grasping. This testimony had two serious weaknesses. First, when Frank Dudley was a baby, Walter Dudley had not been born; he was Frank's *younger* half-brother. He could not therefore have said anything from firsthand observation about Frank's behavior as a baby. Second, Margaret Dudley, whom I interviewed again after talking with Betty Wesley, said that Frank had not complained of pain in his throat. Frank Dudley himself told me that he could not recall having any pain in the area of his birthmark. (But he might have forgotten the experience of the pain.) It seems possible, therefore, that Betty Wesley had amplified what she had heard about Frank's pointing to his throat until, in her modified memories, he had been clutching his throat in pain.

I examined the top of Frank Dudley's head to see whether I could find there any residue of the red area that Margaret Dudley said was present when he was born. This red area was said to correspond to the wound of exit in the head of Dadtookuch. I found no redness at the top of Frank Dudley's head, and nothing else suggestive of a birthmark.

Comment

When I first met Margaret Dudley, she was 72 years old. At our later meetings she was nearly 80 or already there. I recorded in my notes that her memory seemed good. Perhaps I should have added, as one so often does with elderly persons, "for a person of her age." It may be doubted, however, whether we should credit someone with a good memory who cannot remember whether a particular person was her mother's brother or her mother's uncle. And if Margaret Dudley did not have a good memory for such a detail, are we justified in accepting her corroboration of her son's statements and her secondhand report of her mother's verification that Frank's birthmark corresponded in location with the bullet wound that killed Dadtookuch? I do not see why we should not do so. She might have forgotten the exact relationship of a man whom she had never seen and who had died before her birth and yet have remembered other details correctly. Moreover, we should not forget that even in the matter of her relationship to Dadtookuch, she could have been right (in one of her statements) and her son Frank wrong.

It seems to me that Frank showed restraint in his exposition of the memories he claimed to have. I would have been no wiser if he had claimed to remember all the additional details of Dadtookuch's death that his grandmother had furnished; but

he did not do this. He said that when he had been young, he had made a conscious effort to recover more details about the previous life, but had obtained nothing but fragmentary memories and vague impressions. Moreover, at the time I knew him he did not even claim to remember any longer what he had said when younger. He knew—from having been told later—that he had made a few statements about the previous life, but he had not preserved any of his original imaged memories.

THE CASE OF GOVIND NARAIN MISHRA

Summary of the Case and Its Investigation

Govind Narain Mishra was born in Mainpuri, Uttar Pradesh, India, in August 1972. His parents were Laxmi Narain Mishra and his wife, Munni Devi. Laxmi Narain was an Ayurvedic physician. Although they were Brahmins by caste, he and his wife belonged to the Arya Samaj movement, one of the principles of which is the nullification of distinctions of caste (Zaehner, 1962). Govind Narain was the seventh of their eight children. Govind Narain's older sister Swaran Lata was the subject of a verified case. His younger brother, Kailash Narain, unexpectedly used Arabic words, such as *Salaam* and *Allah*, so that his parents thought that he might have been a Moslem in a previous life; but unlike Swaran Lata and Govind Narain, this child never made any statements about a previous life.

At Govind Narain's birth, he was found to have a prominent birthmark on the lateral side of the upper part of his right leg, where the leg joins the trunk at the pelvis (Figure 11-2).

Govind Narain's early development was normal, and he began to speak coherently at about the age of 2. When he was about 3 years old, he began to refer to a previous life. He said that he had been a Dhobi (washer of clothes) and that he had been bitten at the site of his birthmark by a snake. He stated a few other details of the previous life, but never enough to permit verification of it.

Govind Narain's parents called him only Narain when he was born. When he first began to say in Hindi: "I am a Dhobi," they misunderstood him to be saying: "I am Govind," and took this to be the name he remembered from a previous life. Accordingly, they gave him the additional name "Govind."[3]

In October 1975 Dr. Satwant Pasricha and I learned of this case during our investigation of the much more detailed one of Govind Narain's older sister Swaran Lata. We made a few notes about Govind Narain's case in 1975 and then studied it more thoroughly a year later, in October 1976. On some of our subsequent visits to Mainpuri we visited Laxmi Narain and his family and in this way

[3]Other subjects who have mispronounced names and other pertinent words relating to the previous lives they remembered include Imad Elawar, Bishen Chand Kapoor, Sanjeev Sharma, Pappu Singh, Savitri Devi Pathak, Santosh Sukla, Maung Hla Win, and Daw Aye Myint.

continued to follow Govind Narain. He never made statements additional to those about which we learned in 1976, and so we obtained little new information about his case in later visits. I have not met him since February 1983. In December 1983 Dr. Pasricha had a further interview with Laxmi Narain and some other informants thought able to verify Govind Narain's statements.

Govind Narain's parents were our main informants for what he had said and how he had behaved. However, a neighbor and friend of the family, Kalan Baksh, corroborated some of Govind Narain's statements.

I do not think there was much else to learn about Govind Narain's statements. His older brother, Ram Narain, had not been a witness to anything Govind Narain had said. And Govind Narain himself, who was 4 years old in 1976, gave us no information additional to what he had already told his parents.

Statements Made by Govind Narain

As mentioned, Govind Narain's first statement about the previous life was: "I am a Dhobi." He said that he had a wife who was fat and dark, two sons, and a daughter. He said that he had worn a *dhoti* (a garment for the lower part of the body worn by Indian men). He recalled taking his wife and children to *melas* (fairs). He owned three or four donkeys.[4] One day he was sitting down and cropping grass for his donkeys when a snake bit him.[5] As he described the snakebite, he would point to the site of the birthmark on his thigh. Unlike his older sister Swaran Lata, Govind Narain said nothing about how, after death, he had come to Laxmi Narain's family.

In 1976 both of Govind Narain's parents said that he had stated no proper names of persons or places connected with the previous life that he remembered. He had, however, a sense that the previous home was some distance away from that of his parents. During the period when he was talking about the previous life, he would sometimes sit on the lap of Kalan Baksh and say to him: "Let's go and bring my wife. She is crying. It is a long time since I have seen her." Humoring him, Kalan Baksh would say: "How shall we go? By a bus?" and Govind Narain would reply: "By a bullock-cart. We will bring everything in that bullock-cart." The donkeys were apparently to be brought also, but if they and a bullock-cart could transport all the family and their property, the latter must have been of extremely modest extent, which is what we should expect in the family of a Dhobi; they are among the poorest of Indian workers.

Govind Narain could not say where he had lived in the previous life. And the only particular he could communicate about it was the nearness to the house

[4]Many Dhobis in India own donkeys. They need them as pack animals to carry bulky and heavy laundry to and from the rivers and streams where they wash it.

[5]Other subjects who have recalled lives that ended after the person concerned had been bitten by a poisonous snake include Semir Taci, Ma Myint Myint Zaw, U Po Thwai, Maung Naing, and Maung Htay Win.

of some bananas that he said he had planted. It would be difficult to imagine, in India, a *point de repère* less specific. And yet, like many other subjects of these cases, he thought that he could somehow find the place. He would confidently reply: "You come with me and I will show you."

Like many other subjects of these cases, Govind Narain was aware of a change in the size of his body. He said: "I was big. Now I have become small."[6]

Govind Narain's Behavior Related to the Previous Life

Circumstances and Manner of Govind Narain's Speaking about the Previous Life. Munni Devi noticed that when she was washing clothes Govind Narain would be likely to refer to the previous life. For example, if she would be ironing, Govind Narain would say: "My wife used to wash, I used to iron." Then he would offer to help her by saying: "I will do this ironing." At other times he would say: "Give me your clothes. I will wash them for you."

Govind Narain ultimately became a nuisance with his persistent requests to wash the family clothes. His mother's patience gave out, and she beat him to make him go away so that she could get on with the ironing herself.

Sometimes Govind Narain would talk to himself and play at being a Dhobi. He could be heard saying: "My wife is sitting here and cooking the food, and I am washing the clothes."[7]

Munni Devi said that Govind Narain also played at being a doctor. For this, his father, who was a doctor, provided an obvious model.

He also dreamed about the previous life and sometimes would awaken and say: "I was bitten by a snake."[8]

Govind Narain's memories of the wife in the previous life seemed close to the surface of his consciousness. His family learned to exploit this. When he would cry, they would tell him that they would take him to his wife. This assurance would immediately pacify him no matter how troubled he was. That the family never did take him to the wife did not seem to diminish the power of the remedy.

Govind Narain's Desire to Meet the Previous Family. Laxmi Narain said that Govind Narain "used to insist on being taken to the previous family."

[6]Other subjects who have commented on the difference in size between the adult bodies they remember from previous lives and their own child bodies include Marta Lorenz, Parmod Sharma, Michael Wright, Sukla Gupta, Vias Rajpal, Ramoo and Rajoo Sharma, Lalitha Abeyawardena, Ruby Kusuma Silva, Bongkuch Promsin, Rabih Elawar, Semih Tutuşmuş, and the Ven. Chaokhun Rajsuthajarn.

[7]In the reports of the cases of Chanai Choomalaiwong, Lalitha Abeyawardena, and Maung Tin Win I gave examples of other subjects who showed in their play an activity corresponding to the vocation or habits of the previous personality.

[8]Other subjects who have remembered previous lives during dreams and nightmares include Prakash Varshnay, Wijanama Kithsiri, Shamlinie Prema, Salem Andary, and Suleyman Andary.

Govind Narain's Phobia of Snakes. Govind Narain's mother said that he had a phobia of snakes. The family lived on the edge of Mainpuri, and there were fields on the other side of the lane leading to their house. A snake once got into the house when Govind Narain was about 2 years old. He was afraid of it. (His father killed it.)

The Attitude of Govind Narain's Parents toward His Statements and Behavior

Govind Narain's father was an enthusiast of his son's case, as he had been for that of his daughter Swaran Lata. He poured out information about the case without much regard for my capacity to make notes as Dr. Pasricha translated. When Dr. Pasricha turned to Govind Narain himself and asked him what he could then (in 1976) remember, Govind Narain was uncommunicative. Laxmi Narain then undertook to interrogate his son and—half coaxing, half prompting—drew out of him statements about how Govind Narain had died in the previous life that corresponded with what Laxmi Narain had said Govind Narain had been saying at other times. However, although I deplore such prompting of a child, I do not regard it—in the absence of more direct evidence—as indicating that the child's family have coached him fraudulently. Govind Narain, like many of the subjects I have met, was shy with strangers, even such a gentle one as Dr. Pasricha. His father knew what he had said before, and he impatiently wished him to say it again for our benefit; the prompting seemed to him a warrantable remedy against Govind Narain's letting the family down.

Munni Devi had a more neutral attitude toward the case. I have already shown her lack of unqualified enthusiasm for it by mentioning how she beat Govind Narain when he importunately insisted on doing the family's washing.

One might have expected Govind Narain's family not to have welcomed in their family a child who said that he had been a Dhobi in his previous life. (Dhobis are among the lowest castes in India.) The family indeed had a strange assemblage of claimed or presumed previous personalities. Three of their children claimed to have been, or gave indications of having been, respectively a sweeperess, a washerman, and a Moslem. The subjects were Swaran Lata (of whose case Dr. Pasricha and I published a brief account elsewhere), Govind Narain (the subject of the present case), and Kailash Narain. The unusual behavior of these children must have provided some strain for the loyalty of their middle-class Brahmin family to the casteless sect of the Arya Samaj. However, such apparent memories seemed natural to Laxmi Narain, and to his wife also. They were entirely hospitable to persons whom more orthodox Hindus would have regarded as unbearable and even—in the case of a sweeperess—untouchable.

I asked myself whether Laxmi Narain's family had known and perhaps befriended a Dhobi who had died; but this line of thought led nowhere. The family occasionally employed Dhobis, but usually Munni Devi did their washing herself.

An Attempt to Verify Govind Narain's Statements

At the time this case developed Mainpuri had about 100,000 inhabitants. Information about Govind Narain's statements spread in it easily. During the year between our two meetings—of October 1975 and October 1976—Laxmi Narain learned about a Dhobi who had lived in another part of Mainpuri and who had died of snakebite. He decided to take Govind Narain to the area where this Dhobi was said to have lived. So he put Govind Narain in a rickshaw and let him tell the driver where to go. They arrived at another quarter of the city, but Govind Narain could give no directions for reaching the house he was trying to remember. As they were strangers in this quarter, a crowd gathered around them and learned the reason for their visit. Someone in the crowd said there had been a Dhobi there who had died after having been bitten by a snake. Laxmi Narain thought that he had learned from someone in the crowd that the Dhobi had been married and that his widow had moved to Farrukhabad.

That was enough verification for Laxmi Narain but not for Dr. Pasricha and me. We went to the quarter and made inquiries for ourselves. We learned of a Dhobi named Siri Krishan, who had died after having been bitten by a snake. He had died in about 1965. But he had been a boy of 11, not married, and not even engaged (as boys might sometimes be in India). He did not seem to qualify as the person about whom Govind Narain had been talking.

The Dhobis, like members of other caste and craft or trade groups in India, generally know the other members of their group in the community. We enquired of them about other Dhobis who had died of snakebite, but learned of no other person whose life corresponded to Govind Narain's statements.

In December 1983 Laxmi Narain was still convinced that he had found a family of Dhobis in Mainpuri that corresponded with what Govind Narain had been saying. He now added the detail that Govind Narain had earlier stated the name of the father of the previous life: Piyari Lal. He also mentioned another new item stated by Govind Narain. Govind Narain had told one of his aunts that in the previous life when he was a Dhobi, she had brought washing to him, but had not paid his bill; in spite for this unfairness he had torn one of her saris. Laxmi Narain further said that when they had gone to the quarter where the Dhobis lived, Govind Narain had been able to recognize the shop where he had worked in the previous life, the house where he said he had lived, and some members of the Dhobi's family. He and Govind Narain had only gone once to this quarter, so Laxmi Narain was giving us details that either he had failed to mention or we had failed to comprehend when we had talked with him earlier.

These new details stimulated Dr. Pasricha (this time accompanied by Dr. Nicholas McClean-Rice) to return to the quarter where she and I had earlier made inquiries. The new trail, however, led to the same family. It was correct that the father of the youth who died of snakebite was called Piyari Lal. They owned donkeys (but so do nearly all Dhobis). Unfortunately, Piyari Lal had died and his family had dispersed. It was not possible to obtain any additional trustworthy

information. The problem remained that, although a Dhobi had died of snakebite in that quarter, he had been an unmarried boy. Compounding our difficulties, a physician of Mainpuri who had accompanied Govind Narain and his father on the visit to the quarter where the Dhobis lived died before we could meet and interview him.

Comment. It is no fault of Dr. Pasricha that these later investigations of 1983 did not advance our understanding of the case. A possibility remains that Govind Narain remembered some details corresponding to the life of Siri Krishan, the son of the Dhobi Piyari Lal, but got other details mixed up—confusing perhaps Siri Krishan's mother with a wife. My opinion, however, is that the case should be considered unsolved. I think Laxmi Narain's enthusiasm for it led him to conclude prematurely that he had found a family correctly corresponding to Govind Narain's statements.

The case provides an excellent example to emphasize the need for independent verifications of a subject's statements.

Govind Narain's Birthmark

Figure 11-2 shows Govind Narain's birthmark as it appeared in October 1975, when he was a little more than 3 years old. The birthmark was approximately round and about 1 centimeter in diameter. It consisted of a pale central area surrounded by a circle with increased pigmentation compared with the skin outside its margins. It was located on the right hip above the buttock. Munni Devi said that it had not bled or oozed at the time of Govind Narain's birth.

In the year between my first examination of the birthmark in 1975 and my second in 1976 it had faded considerably.

Govind Narain's Later Development

In February 1983 Govind Narain was about 10½ years old. He was in the fifth grade at school and doing well there. At this time he rarely spoke spontaneously about the previous life. He had some attraction to the quarter of the city where the family of Dhobis earlier identified as corresponding to his statements had lived; and he sometimes went there to visit members of the family he thought he had identified from his memories of the previous life.

Govind Narain still had some fear of snakes.

The birthmark on his right hip had faded until it was barely visible. However, we could still see and photograph (Figure 11-3) an area of slight hyperpigmentation. It was inferior to the site where the birthmark had been in 1975-1976, which indicates some shifting as Govind Narain had grown.

By December 1983 Govind Narain, according to his father, had lost his interest in going to the quarter in Mainpuri where the Dhobis lived. Laxmi Narain quoted him as having said: "Why should I go there? To become a Dhobi again?"

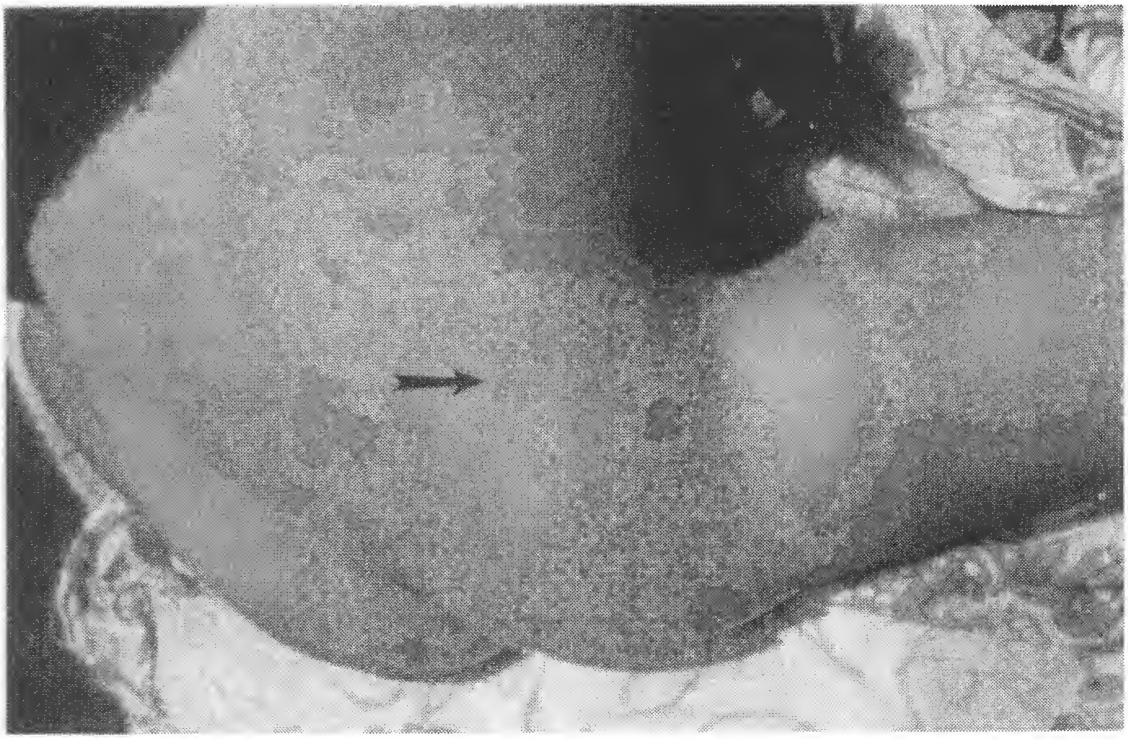


Figure 11-2 Birthmark on the right hip of Govind Narain Mishra as it appeared in October 1975, when he was a little more than 3 years old. The birthmark was approximately round and about 1 centimeter in diameter.

Figure 11-3 Same area of Govind Narain's right hip, as it appeared in February 1983, when he was about 10½ years old. At this time the birthmark had become much less prominent, and it consisted only of an approximately round area of increased pigmentation. This region of hyperpigmentation was somewhat inferior to the place where the birthmark had been 7 years earlier.

THE CASE OF DEREK BETUS

Introduction

Godwin Samararatne conducted the main interviews for the investigation of this case. I myself met Derek once and also had one interview with his mother and one with the mother of the youth whose life Derek remembered.

Summary of the Case and Its Investigation

Derek Betus was born in Gampaha, Sri Lanka, on January 22, 1979. His parents were Desmond Betus and his wife, Chandra. Derek was their only child. Desmond Betus was a clerical worker, who, during the period of the case's investigation, was working in Saudi Arabia. He was a Roman Catholic, and his wife was a Buddhist. He had left Sri Lanka before Derek had begun to speak about a previous life. Derek and his mother lived—in precarious economic circumstances—in the village of Pahalagama, which is about 3 kilometers from Gampaha. His mother had lived in Pahalagama since her birth.

Derek began to speak short phrases when he was about 1½ years old. When he was 2½, he began speaking about a previous life. He said that he had lived in a place called Balumahara, where he had "another mother" and a younger brother. He said that he had attended school at Miriswatte. One day when he was at a temple a dog had bitten him, and he died. When Derek described how the dog had bitten him, he pointed toward the big toe of his left foot. His mother then, for the first time, noticed a mark at the place to which Derek pointed. She clearly regarded this as a birthmark, even though she had not noticed it earlier. (This is a case in which a mark, almost certainly a birthmark, was not noticed until the subject was about 2½ years old.)

Chandra Betus had never heard of anyone corresponding to Derek's statements. She had heard of Balumahara (which is 10 kilometers from Pahalagama), but she had no occasion to go there, either for shopping or to worship at its temple. Gampaha (where she went for shopping) was larger and closer; and there was a temple at Pahalagama. She took no steps to verify Derek's statements, but a woman who was lodging with her, Chandra Alwis, went to Balumahara and learned that some years earlier a youth had died there after being bitten by a dog at a temple. This youth was Maithripala Rupasinghe, and he had died at Balumahara on July 18, 1964. This initial confirmation led to a meeting between Derek (and his mother) and Maithripala's mother, K. Catherene Perera. (Maithripala's father had died in 1976.) Derek was taken to Balumahara and there was credited with making several recognitions of objects and places familiar to Maithripala. He did not recognize K. Catherene Perera.

The families first met in October 1982. Derek was then a little more than 3½ years old. Within a few weeks a journalist learned of the case and published a report of it in the newspaper *Divaina* on November 21, 1982. Tissa Jayawardene

read this account, and he went almost immediately to Pahalagama, where he recorded preliminary information for us and sketched and photographed Derek's birthmark.

In the following month (December 1982) Godwin Samararatne entered the investigation of the case. Then and in February 1983 he interviewed informants for both families as well as two monks (one of them the Ven. Sumangala) who contributed pertinent testimony. He took Derek to the temple at Balumahara, which Maithripala had often visited and where a dog had bitten him. Derek made no definite recognitions there. He indicated the place at the temple where the dog had bitten Maithripala, but although the site was plausible because dogs tended to stay in that area, the monk available at the temple on the day of Derek's visit had not been there when the dog had bitten Maithripala.

My shorter interviews came much later, in March 1986, and were largely restricted to filling some gaps in the information already obtained and to learning about Derek's later development. It was then that we observed that Derek's birthmark had completely faded since the observations of 1982-1983.

In January 1988 Tissa Jayawardene returned to the site of the case and clarified some details of it with Derek's mother and with Maithripala's older sister, Sriyawathi. He also obtained and translated a copy of Maithripala's death certificate.

The Illness and Death of Maithripala

K. Catherene Perera said that Maithripala had been bitten by a dog near the left great toe and had died about 2 weeks later. He was not taken to the hospital at Gampaha, but instead treated by Ayurvedic physicians reputed skilled in treating rabies. The Ven. Sumangala, who had taken Maithripala for treatment after he was bitten, confirmed that the dog had bitten him near the big toe. He could not, in 1982, remember on which foot the dog had bitten Maithripala. Both informants for the location of the wound on Maithripala's foot said that only the dog's upper teeth had penetrated the skin; there had been no wound on the sole of Maithripala's foot.

There is no doubt that Maithripala was bitten on the foot by a dog. And it is almost certain that the dog that bit him was rabid, because it died the same day. It does not follow, however, from these facts alone that Maithripala died of rabies. Only 21% of persons bitten by rabid animals on the leg develop clinical rabies (Babes, 1912, p. 82). The usual incubation period for rabies—20 to 60 days—is much longer than would be required for this diagnosis in Maithripala's case, although an incubation period as short as 9 days has been recorded (Hattwick and Gregg, 1975). Finally, Maithripala's symptoms as described by his mother and the Ven. Sumangala were far from characteristic of those of rabies. Nevertheless, Maithripala was treated as if he had rabies, and his mother believed that this was the cause of his death. So did whoever completed Maithripala's death certificate on which rabies was the assigned cause of death. The death certificate did not mention a dog bite.

Statements Made by Derek

The informants remembered 14 statements that Derek had made about the previous life. Of these one was wrong, and the other 13 correct for Maithripala's life. The wrong statement was the name of a monk whom Maithripala had known. There had been a monk at Balumahara whom Maithripala had much respected, and when Maithripala was dying, he had sent for this particular monk to be with him. Derek had given this monk's name as Jinaratane (or possibly Jinananda), but it was Sumangala. Moreover, the Ven. Sumangala and another monk of the area could not remember any other monk called Jinaratane during their times in the area.

Derek's Behavior Related to the Previous Life

Derek showed an unusual, precocious interest in Buddhism, and he particularly liked to chant. At one stage it appeared that he might have known some Buddhist chants that he could not have heard normally, but closer inquiry showed that this was not so. However, this did not detract from the importance of his unusually strong interest in Buddhism generally and in chanting. Maithripala had had a keen interest in Buddhism, often frequented the temple near his home, and had participated in the chanting.

Maithripala was said to have been "mischievous," and this trait was attributed to Derek also. However, we did not learn specific details of their behavior that presumably warranted this adjective.

Other Relevant Behavior of Derek

Derek had no phobia of dogs. He did sometimes remark, when a dog approached him: "Some dogs are good. They do not bite me."

Derek showed an interest in kites between the ages of 2 and 3. (Maithripala had flown a kite, but an interest in kites is widespread among boys of Sri Lanka.)

Other Relevant Information

During our interviews for this case we learned that the two families concerned had had no acquaintance with each other before the case developed. The distance—10 kilometers—between the two villages where the families lived may seem small (at least to Western readers), but in Sri Lanka it is long for a person without private vehicular transport.

There was a marked economic difference between the families. Derek's father was an irregular, negligent remitter of funds to his wife and son, and they lived in poverty. In contrast, Maithripala's mother, K. Catherene Perera, occupied a large house in spacious grounds. Although she had already raised a family of her own, she offered to take Derek and keep him at her home; but Chandra Betus understandably refused this proposal. K. Catherene Perera had been giving Derek and his mother some financial assistance.

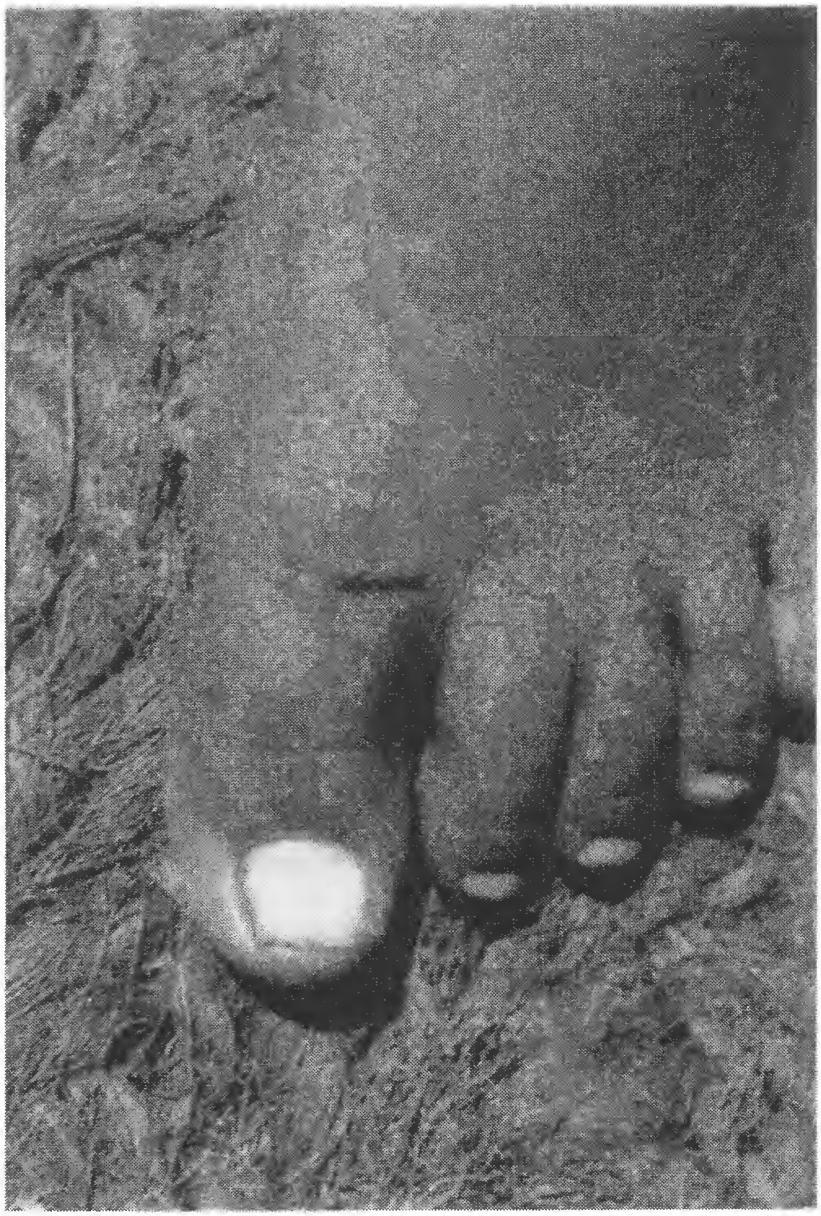


Figure 11-4 Distal part of the left foot of Derek Betus as it appeared in November 1982, when he was just under 4 years old. The birthmark was an area of decreased pigmentation at the base of the left great toe. It was about 3–4 millimeters long and 1–2 millimeters wide.

Derek's Birthmark

Figure 11-4 shows Derek's birthmark at the base of the left great toe as it appeared in November 1982, when Tissa Jayawardene photographed it. Figure 11-5 shows the same area in February 1986; no trace of the birthmark remained.

As I mentioned, Chandra Betus was sure that the mark on Derek's left great toe was a birthmark, even though she had not noticed it until he drew it to her attention. She said that he had had no insect bite, injury, or disease at the site of the mark.

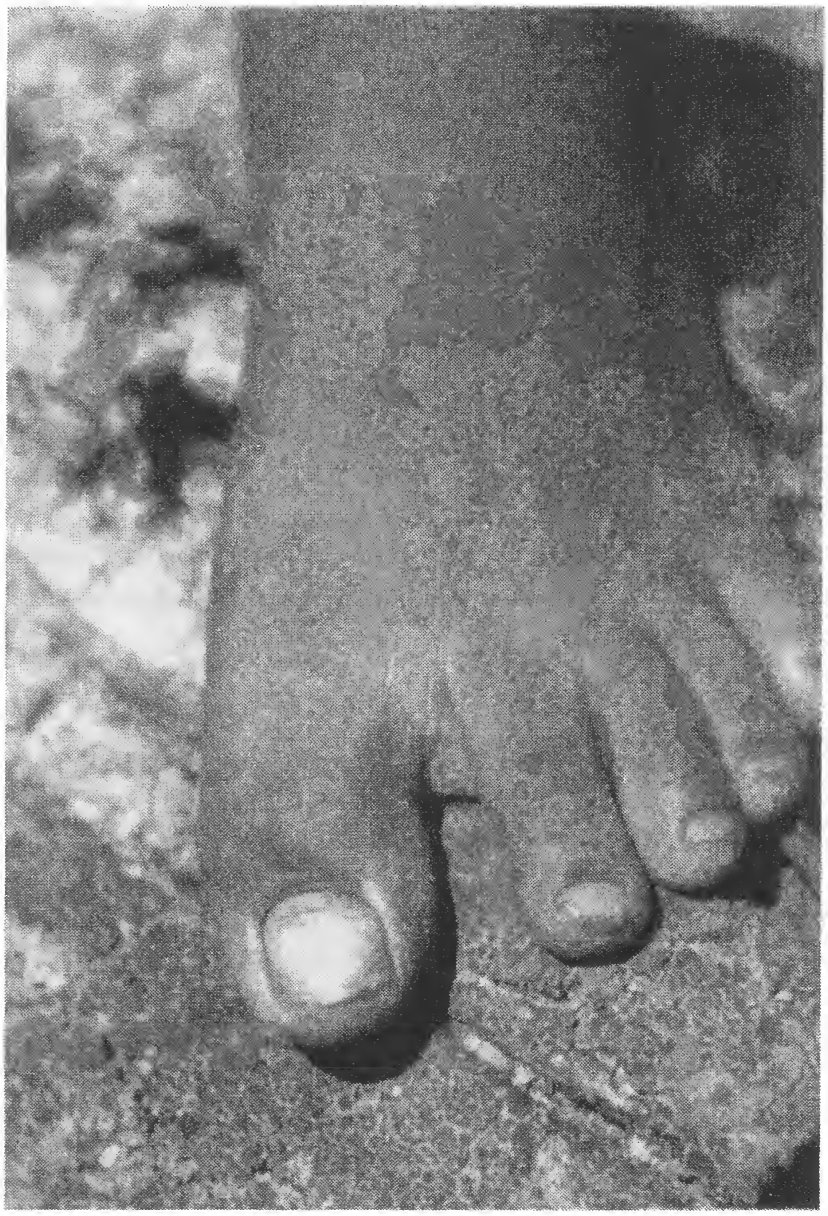


Figure 11-5 The same area of the left foot of Derek Betus as that shown in Figure 11-4. This photograph was taken in February 1986, when Derek was 7 years old. The birthmark had by this time completely faded.

K. Catherene Perera said that the mark on Derek's toe was at the same location as the wound of the dog bite on Maithripala.

Comment on the Evidence of Paranormal Processes in the Case

This case has features that invite an imputation of fraud. It may be supposed that Derek's mother learned normally about Maithripala's death, and, noting on Derek's foot the scar of some old furuncle or injury, she could have coached him

to play the role of the deceased Maithripala with a view to obtaining financial assistance from Maithripala's comparatively prosperous family.

However, several features of the case militate against such a view of it and make me believe in its authenticity. As I have already explained, the two villages are—for Sri Lanka—a considerable distance apart. Maithripala had died more than 14 years before Derek's birth and 17 years before he began speaking about a previous life. It would have made Chandra Betus's account of the case stronger if she had claimed to have observed the birthmark at his birth or soon afterward, but she did not do this. Her account of what Derek had been saying received support from several other persons. First, her lodger had heard Derek make the principal statements his mother attributed to him. Then a neighbor had heard Derek make other statements about the previous life. And finally, K. Catherene Perera said that he had made several recognitions of objects and places when he first came to her house. An interpretation of this case as a hoax has therefore to suppose that at least three other adults (besides Derek's mother) with nothing to gain from telling lies were parties to a deception.

THE CASE OF CELAL KAPAN

Celal Kapan was born in about 1952 in the village of Nardüzü, near İskenderun in the province of Hatay, Turkey. I give a detailed description of his case in Chapter 21. He remembered the life of a dock worker who had been struck on the head by some heavy object, probably a barrel of fuel, that was dropped on him accidentally when he was asleep in the hold of a ship.

Celal was born with a prominent birthmark in the center of the forehead. (He also suffered from chronic discharges from his ears, which is my reason for treating his case at length in the chapter on internal diseases.)

In this chapter I am concerned only to describe and illustrate the fading of the birthmark on Celal's forehead. In November 1967, when he was 15 years old, the birthmark was a prominent area of scarlike tissue running more or less vertically in the center of his forehead. I did not then photograph it, but I sketched it (Figure 11-6).

In March 1971 Celal was 19 years old. The birthmark had appreciably faded, as my sketch of that year (also in Figure 11-6) shows. In 1971 I also photographed the birthmark, which can be seen faintly in Figure 11-7.

THE CASE OF FARIS YUYUCUER

Faris Yuyucuer was born on August 24, 1970, in Adana, Turkey. A defect of his penis, another of his left lower lip, and a birthmark on his left buttock were all noticed immediately after his birth. I shall describe the birth defects in Chapter 19 and here give attention only to the birthmark on Faris's left buttock, which faded during the several years of our observing him.

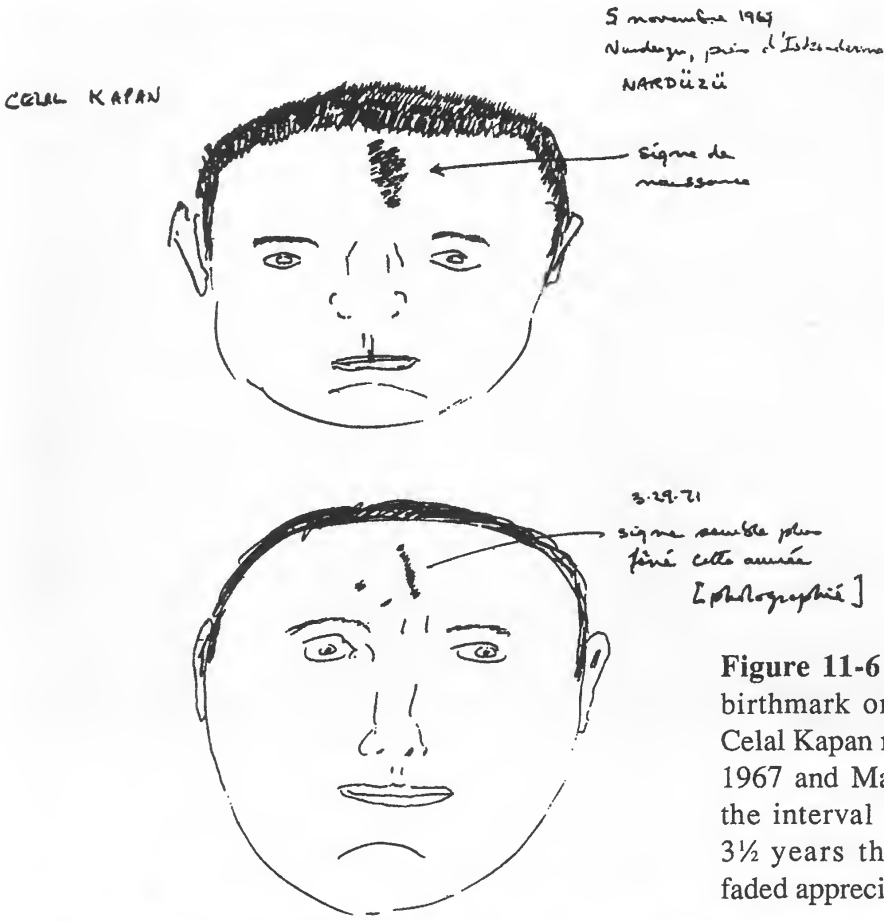


Figure 11-6 Sketches of the birthmark on the forehead of Celal Kapan made in November 1967 and March 1971. During the interval of approximately 3½ years the birthmark had faded appreciably.

Figure 11-7 Birthmark on the forehead of Celal Kapan as it appeared in March 1971, when he was about 19 years old. The birthmark was in the center of the forehead. It is not the nearly horizontal groove, but a wider, faint vertical area of puckered tissue that can be seen above the medial end of that groove. The birthmark was about 2 centimeters long and 3 millimeters wide. At this time it had faded considerably compared with its earlier appearance (for which see the sketch reproduced in Figure 11-6).

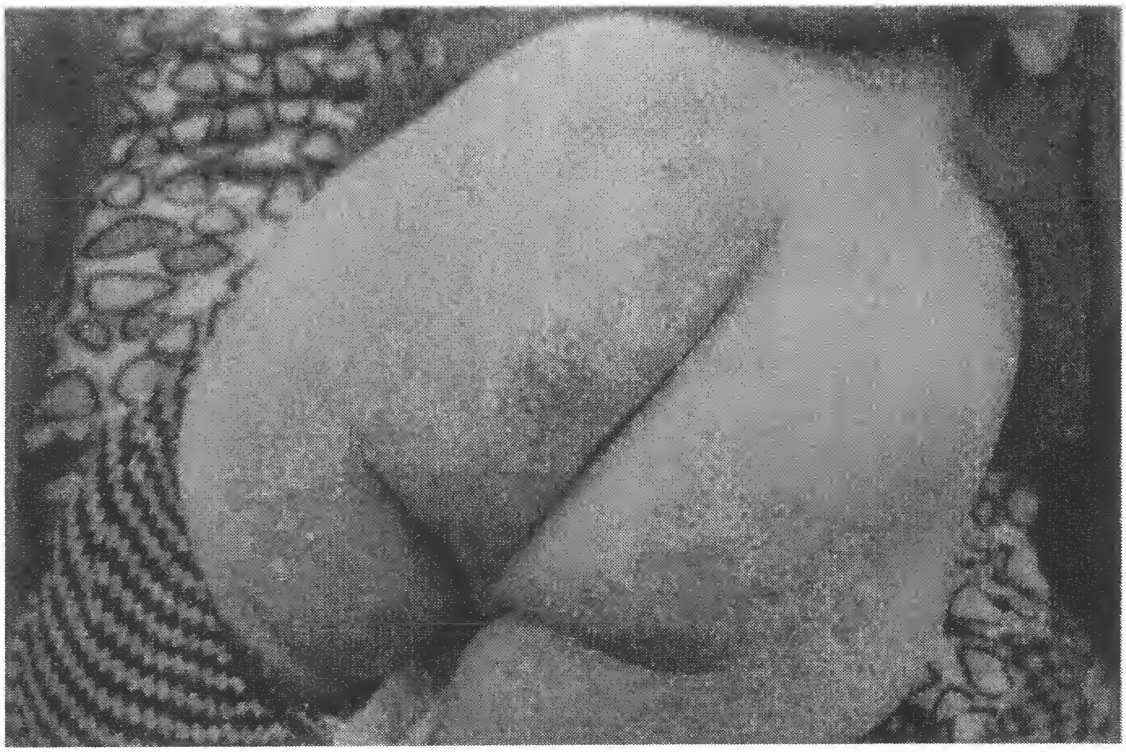


Figure 11-8 Birthmark on the left buttock of Faris Yuyucuer as it appeared in March 1971, when he was 7 months old. The birthmark was a nevus flammeus, red and slightly puckered. It was generally round in shape and about 1.5 centimeters in diameter.

The birthmark on Faris's left buttock corresponded to a burn at the same site on a young boy called Hasan Derin of whose life Faris had memories that he expressed when he became able to speak. Hasan had drowned in July 1970, not far from where the Yuyucuers lived.

Reşat Bayer and I learned about this case in March 1971, and we made our first investigation of it on March 23 of that year. Faris was then only 7 months old. His parents had already identified him, at least provisionally, as the reincarnation of Hasan Derin on the basis of dreams and the birth defects and birthmark Faris had. Faris, still a baby in arms, had not yet learned to speak. We were able to return to his family during the next 6 years and learned about his statements and behavior related to the life and death of Hasan Derin.

Figure 11-8 shows the birthmark on Faris's left buttock as it appeared in March 1971, when he was 7 months old. The birthmark was a nevus flammeus, generally round in shape and about 1.5 centimeters in diameter. It was intensely red and somewhat puckered.

Figure 11-9 shows the birthmark as it appeared in September 1975, when Faris was just over 5 years old. At this time the birthmark had evolved into a hyperpigmented macule.

Figure 11-10 shows Faris's left buttock as it appeared in March 1977, when he was 6½ years old. The birthmark had by this time almost completely faded, although the photograph suggests that a slight degree of hyperpigmentation had persisted.

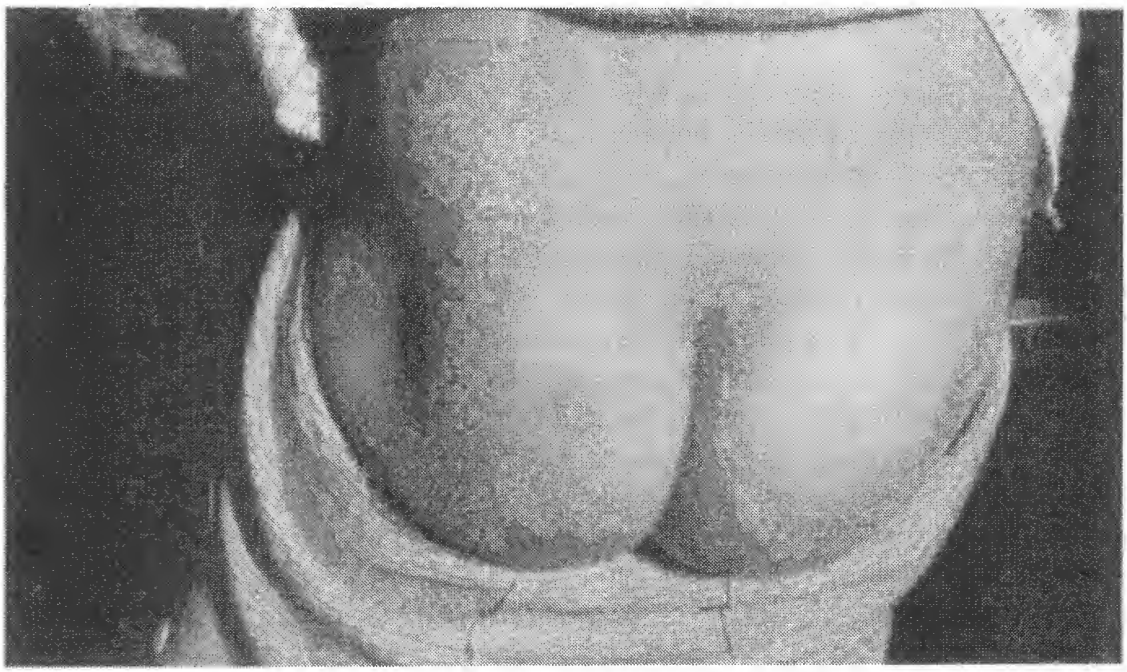


Figure 11-9 Birthmark on the left buttock of Faris Yuyucuer as it appeared in September 1975, when he was just over 5 years old. The birthmark had become a hyperpigmented macule.

Figure 11-10 Left buttock of Faris Yuyucuer as it appeared in March 1977, when he was 6½ years old. The birthmark had almost completely disappeared. There was a slight suggestion of hyperpigmentation where it had formerly been.

OTHER CHANGES IN THE APPEARANCE OF BIRTHMARKS

The fading of birthmarks is by far the most common change in their appearance that informants mention. A few of them have commented on other changes in the appearance of the birthmarks, and I will describe some of these.

At the time I photographed the prominent birthmark on Hanumant Saxena's chest, when he was 16 years old (Figure 6-25), his father remarked that the birthmark had become relatively larger since Hanumant's birth. In contrast, Obike Nwonye's father said that Obike's birthmark (Figure 12-6) had become relatively smaller between his birth and the time I photographed it, when he was 11½ years old. (I describe Obike's case in Chapter 12.)

Some birthmarks decrease in area when fading occurs at their margins. This seems to have happened with the birthmark of Ma Sanda Win (described in Chapter 10) and also with that of Ravi Shankar Gupta, which I describe in the next section of this chapter. At his birth it stretched right across the front of his neck. As he grew, the birthmark shifted in position and also faded at its lateral margins, so that it came to be only about 5 centimeters wide when he was an adult.

The birthmark of Ma Myat Myat Htwe, also described in Chapter 10, evolved from being a hyperpigmented macule when she was 4 years old to a somewhat larger, slightly elevated and hairy nevus when she was about 10. Figures 10-21 and 10-22 show this evolution.

I think a somewhat similar change occurred in the extensive birthmarks of Ma Khin Hsann Oo, which I described in Chapter 9. I did not meet her until she was 9½ years old. At that time she had numerous elevated, puckered, and hairy hyperpigmented nevi. A photograph of her (Figure 9-5) taken when she was a baby of about 6-7 months old (although it is not as clear as we should like) suggests that these nevi had developed from what were earlier flat hyperpigmented macules.

The birthmark on Corliss Chotkin's back (described in Chapter 12) was red at his birth and not hyperpigmented. As he grew, however, it became hyperpigmented and was deeply so when I first examined him in 1962. He was then 15 years old.

In previous chapters I have frequently referred to a type of change in the appearance of the birthmarks that occurs during the subject's infancy. I refer to the healing—whether through natural processes or with the help of treatments—of birthmarks that are raw, bleeding, or discharging serum or pus at birth. I have drawn attention to this feature in more than a dozen cases already described. The healing is often incomplete and scarring may occur. The outside observer, arriving much later, can then examine not the birthmark as it was at birth but the residual scar. Examples of these changes occurred in the cases of Duran İncirgöz, Cemil Fahrici, and Maung Zaw Thein Lwin. I will next present a brief report of another example.

THE CASE OF MAUNG CHIT HTUN

Maung Chit Htun was born in the village of Magyee, near Nga-Zun, in Upper Burma on February 9, 1943. Right after his birth he was found to have

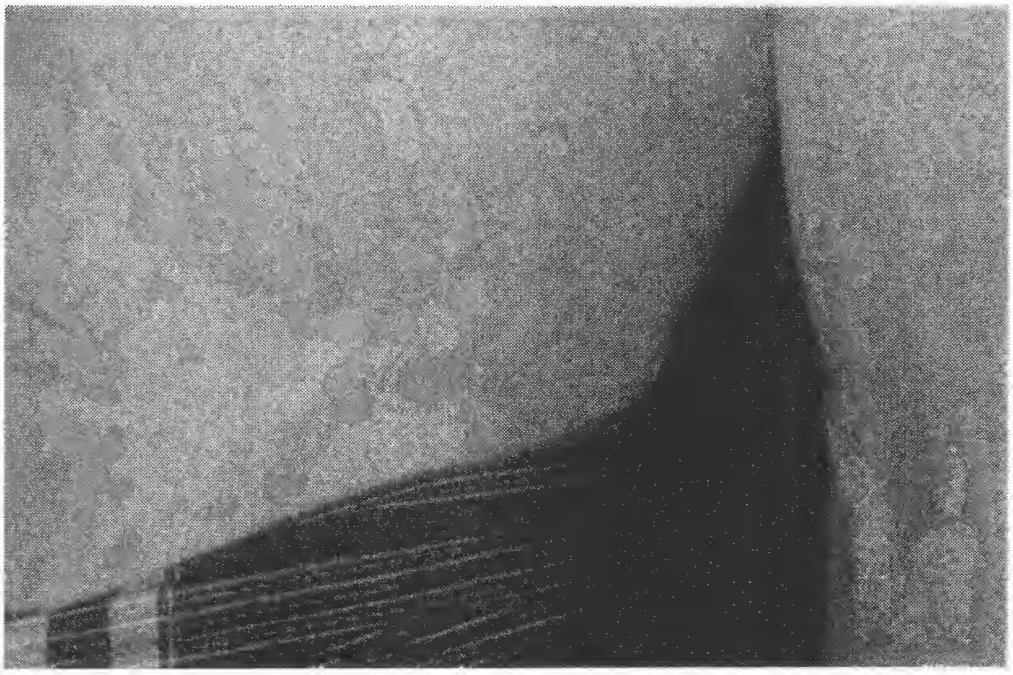


Figure 11-11 Birthmark on the left lower chest and upper abdomen of Maung Chit Htun as it appeared in September 1972, when he was 29 years old. The birthmark was an extensive area of hypopigmented scar tissue.

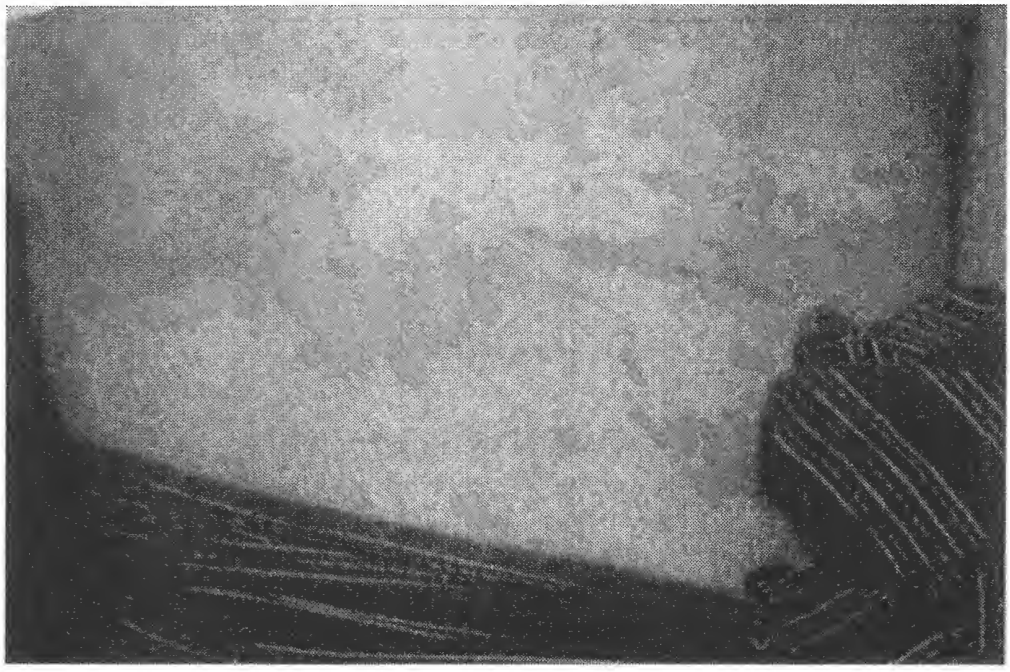


Figure 11-12 Birthmark on the lower back of Maung Chit Htun as it appeared in September 1972, when he was 29 years old. This also was an extensive area of hypopigmented scar tissue.

extensive areas of skin that were raw and bleeding on his abdomen and on his back. These healed with extensive residual scars, which can be seen in Figures 11-11 and 11-12, despite the poor quality of the photographs.

U Win Maung learned of this case in 1972 from another resident of Magyee, Daw Yin. She remembered going to see Maung Chit Htun as a newborn baby and examining his raw and bleeding birthmarks.

When Maung Chit Htun was between 3 and 4 years old, he showed a marked phobia of persons he recognized as coming from a village called Karma which is 1.5 kilometers from Magyee. He used to hide when one of them came into Magyee. At about this time Maung Chit Htun began speaking about a previous life in which he had been made slightly drunk and then killed with swords by three men who were settling an unknown grudge. Two of them were from Karma. Maung Chit Htun's statements and behavior corresponded to the life and death of a man called U Po Htwe who had lived in Karma village and was killed near there in about 1940. Maung Chit Htun recognized a number of persons from Karma village. He also recognized—when he first went to Karma at the age of 7—various places familiar to U Po Htwe. The most notable of these was the place in the village where U Po Htwe's family had lived, which was away from the place where they were living when Maung Chit Htun went to Magyee.

U Win Maung's informants for this case were Maung Chit Htun himself, Daw Yin, and her husband, U Thu Daw.

Daw Yin was able to verify that U Po Htwe had been killed and his alleged murderers brought to trial through the testimony of a resident of Karma, who was himself later murdered. She did not, however, say that she knew where U Po Htwe's murderers had stabbed him with their swords. We thus lack independent evidence of a correspondence between Maung Chit Htun's birthmarks and U Po Htwe's fatal wounds. I have not met Maung Chit Htun myself, and I omit other details of the case. Its relevance here derives from the extensive scarring at the sites of Maung Chit Htun's birthmarks, which, as I mentioned, Daw Yin saw almost immediately after Maung Chit Htun's birth.

THE MOVEMENT OF BIRTHMARKS

During gestation and through childhood until growth ceases, the parts of the human body change markedly in the different proportions they contribute to the body (Tanner, 1978). Stratz (1909) published a series of diagrams (Figures 11-13, 11-14, and 11-15) that show the changes in the relative proportions of body segments observable at different stages of a person's growth.

At birth (as shown in the third sketch from the left in Figure 11-13) the head accounts for one-quarter of the total body length. There is almost no neck. The trunk is relatively long and the limbs, especially the legs, are relatively short compared with the proportions they afterward have in the entire body. In adulthood (first sketch on the right of Figure 11-13) the head accounts for one-eighth of the total body length. The neck has become substantially longer as have the limbs, especially the legs.

Figure 11-14 presents another view of these different proportions by matching a newborn baby and an adult as if they were of the same height.

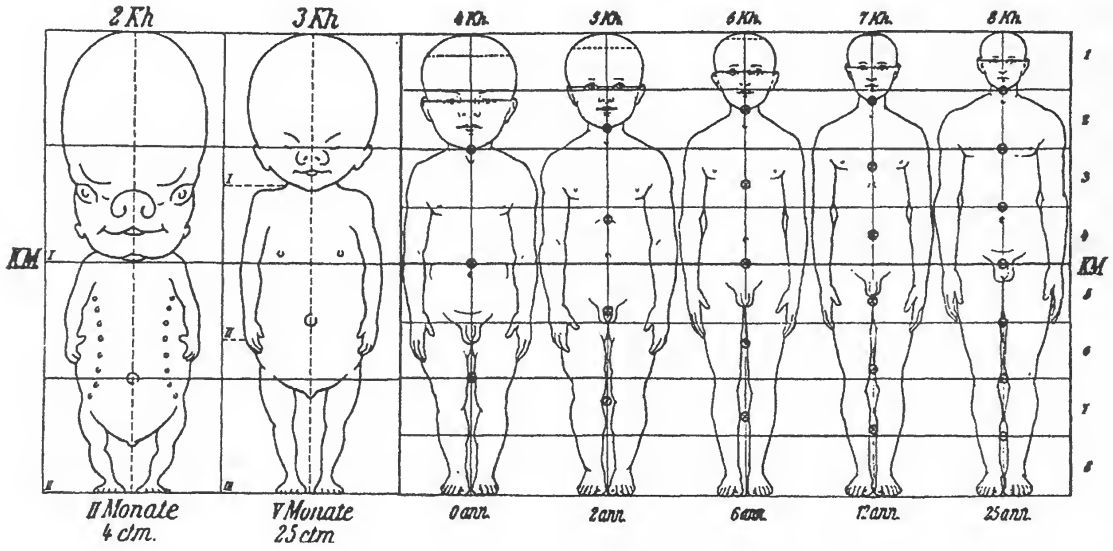


Figure 11-13 This figure shows the changing proportions of head, neck, trunk, and limbs in the human body from a 2-month-old embryo to adulthood. (Adapted from Stratz, 1909.) The abbreviation *Kh*, at the tops of the sketches, means "Kopfhöhe," that is, the head length from the bottom of the chin to the top of the head. The numerals beside the abbreviation indicate the number of head lengths in the entire body at the age given below each figure. At birth (third sketch from the left) the body is 4 head lengths. In adulthood (sketch at the extreme right) the body is 8 head lengths. Beneath each sketch the age is indicated: The first two sketches (from the left-hand side) show the fetus at 2 months and 5 months. The other sketches, from left to right, show the body at birth and then at the ages of 2, 6, 12, and 25 years.
The abbreviation *KM* at the extreme right and left of the figures means "Körpermitte" and indicates the middle of the body between the top of the head and the soles of the feet. The umbilicus can be seen to be below this midpoint in the newborn baby, and then it gradually rises above the midpoint of the body as the legs become relatively longer.

Considerable changes occur in the different proportions of the head itself, as Figure 11-15 demonstrates. The jaws become proportionately larger and the cranium proportionately smaller from birth to adulthood.

When I have asked informants for these cases whether the birthmark has changed its position relative to anatomical landmarks, the majority of the respondents say they have noticed no such change. There have been some exceptions, however, and I have already mentioned some of their observations in case reports of earlier chapters. I shall first review briefly these observations already described and then present in greater detail two cases that illustrate the movement of birthmarks in relation to other parts of the body.

1. Nasruddin Shah's mother noted that Nasruddin's principal birthmark had migrated inferiorly and medially between the time he was born and when he was 13½.

2. Hanumant Saxena's father said in 1979 (when Hanumant was 24 years old and fully grown) that his birthmark was then superior to its previous location.

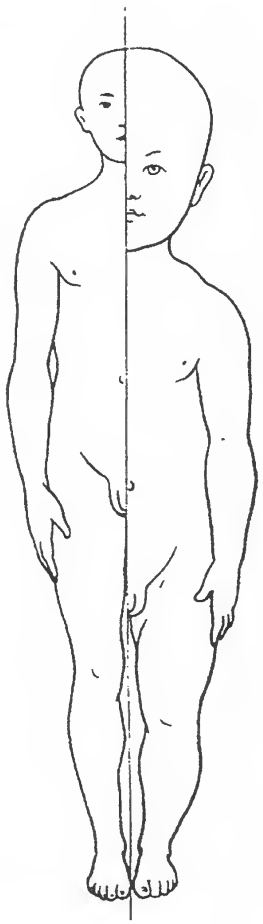
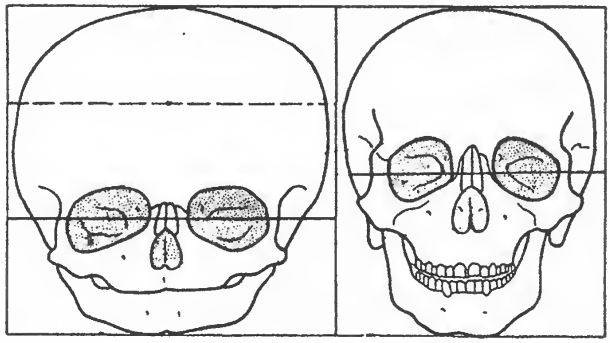


Figure 11-14 This diagram shows for comparison the main outlines of an adult body matched to the same length as the corresponding parts of a newborn's body. (From Stratz, 1909.)



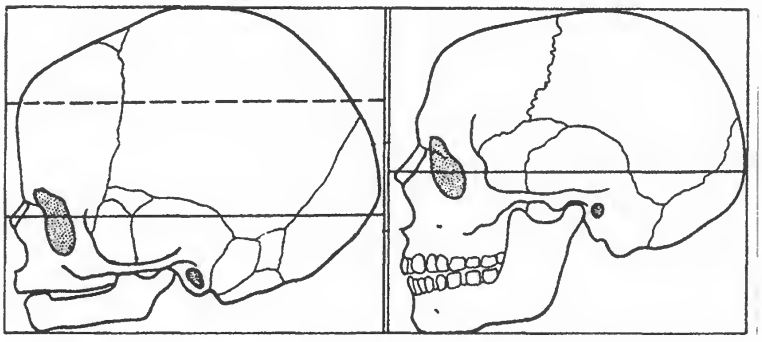


Figure 11-15 This diagram shows the outlines of a skull of a newborn baby compared with the outline of the skull of an adult. From birth to adulthood the jaws become proportionately larger and the cranium proportionately smaller. (From Stratz, 1909.)

3. Susumu Ogura's birthmark (corresponding to a surgical incision for mastoidectomy) had shifted medially between the time of his birth and adulthood; that is, it had moved away from the pinna of his ear.

4. Susan Wilson stated that she thought the birthmark on the lateral aspect of her left chest had migrated anteriorly as she grew older. (I did not learn about such movement from her mother; but I had not asked her about it.)

5. The birthmark on the right buttock of Huriye Bugay migrated until by the time she was 10½ years old it was on the upper thigh, several centimeters below the buttock.

6. The posterior birthmark on Chanai Choomalaiwong's head moved anteriorly between March 1979, when Chanai was 11½ years old, and the late spring of 1986, when he was 18 years old. The anterior birthmark seemed not to have shifted relatively to the posterior birthmark or to other anatomical points.

7. The two birthmarks on Corliss Chotkin, Jr. (whose case I describe in Chapter 12) both migrated. One that at his birth was between the root of his nose and the medial angle of his right eye shifted inferiorly until it was on his right nares. (This birthmark corresponded to the wound of a dacryocystectomy.) Corliss's second birthmark, on his upper right back, moved inferiorly after his birth. (This birthmark corresponded probably to an operation, either for a biopsy of suspected cancer or to drain an abscess of the lung.)

8. In the first section of this chapter I mentioned that Govind Narain Mishra's birthmark seemed to have moved inferiorly between 1975 and 1983.

9. Necip Ünlütaşkıran's father said that Necip's birthmarks had changed position between his birth and the time we investigated his case; but I did not learn details of these changes.

I next present reports of two other cases in which informants had observed movement of birthmarks after the subject's birth.

THE CASE OF RAVI SHANKAR GUPTA

Introduction

I have published elsewhere a detailed report of this case and so will here only summarize its main features and describe the birthmark and how its position changed as Ravi Shankar grew up.

Summary of the Case

Ravi Shankar Gupta was born in Kanauj, Uttar Pradesh, India, in July 1951. His parents were Babu Ram Gupta and his wife, Ramdulari. He had a birthmark that ran horizontally across the front of his neck and resembled the scar of a long knife wound. One observer said that his neck looked as if his head had been glued onto his trunk. Ravi Shankar's mother told me that she had not noticed the mark

on her son's neck until he was 3 or 4 months old.[9] However, no one concerned in the case seemed to doubt that it was congenital.

When Ravi Shankar was between 2 and 3 years old, he began to talk about a previous life of which he gave numerous details. These included an account of how two men (one a relative) had lured him away from his home and murdered him by cutting his throat. As Ravi Shankar talked about this murder he would say that the birthmark on his neck came from the fatal wound.

Ravi Shankar's statements corresponded to details in the life of a 6-year-old boy called Munna, who had been brutally murdered (by being decapitated) on January 19, 1951. Munna had lived with his parents in another district of Kanauj. The police arrested his probable murderers, and one of them confessed to the crime, saying that they had killed Munna with a razor. However, he later withdrew his confession, and the trial court acquitted both men, because there had been no eyewitnesses to the murder.

Ravi Shankar talked so much about the previous life—even demanding the toys that he said were still at his home of that life—that his father became afraid he might lose him to Munna's family. Accordingly, he tried to stop Ravi Shankar from talking about the previous life, and he refused to discuss his son's statements with Munna's father, Jageshwar Prasad. Nevertheless, Jageshwar Prasad contrived to meet Ravi Shankar (with the connivance of Ravi Shankar's mother), and Ravi Shankar's statements and recognitions completely convinced him that he was the reincarnation of Munna. (I have given a list of these statements and recognitions in my detailed report of the case.) Ravi Shankar named as his murderers of the previous life the two men whom the police had arrested, and Jageshwar Prasad wished to reopen the judicial proceedings against them on the basis of Ravi Shankar's testimony; but this was infeasible.

Several investigators studied this case beginning in 1956. I did not myself meet Ravi Shankar until 1964, when he was 13 years old. I met him again in 1969, 1971, and in 1974, but have not met him since. At my several meetings with him I examined his birthmark and observed its changes between 1964 and 1974. I did not photograph it, however, until 1971.

Ravi Shankar's Birthmark

During Ravi Shankar's infancy and early childhood the birthmark ran horizontally across the front of his neck. Ravi Shankar's older brother, Uma Shankar

[9]Although Ravi Shankar's mother did not notice the mark on his neck until 3 or 4 months after his birth, I accept that it was congenital, mainly because a long linear mark across the neck could only have been made, after Ravi Shankar's birth, by some extraordinary accident that I am sure Ramdulari would have later remembered. (Her husband had died by the time I investigated the case.)

Trying to imagine how Ramdulari could have failed to notice such a prominent birthmark earlier than she did, I recalled the poverty of her house, the darkness of its interior, and the secluded life in purdah that she lived—even in 1964, when I met her. It seems probable that she did not bring Ravi Shankar into a good light until he was several months old. In the poorly illuminated room where I think she and Ravi Shankar remained most of the time during his early infancy, no one could have examined his skin adequately.

Figure 11-16 Birthmark on the inferior surface of Ravi Shankar's chin, as it appeared in November 1971, when he was a little more than 20 years old. The birthmark was a linear area of hyperpigmentation about 5 centimeters from the anterior tip of the chin. It was about 5 centimeters long and about 5 millimeters wide.

(who was 14 years old when Ravi Shankar was born), said that the birthmark was then about 2½ inches (more than 6 centimeters) wide. In a newborn baby this would mean that it extended across or almost across the entire front of the neck. It must have done so to give the appearance that I mentioned of his head looking as if it had been glued on. It was then located about one-third of the distance between the sternal notch and the chin.

By 1964 the birthmark had shifted in relation to other tissues, and it was then high up on the neck, just below the chin. It was a horizontal linear mark about 5 centimeters long and 4-5 millimeters wide. It was more pigmented than the surrounding skin and had a somewhat stippled appearance. It looked to me much like an old scar of a healed knife wound.

By 1969 and 1971 the birthmark had changed further in its position relative to neighboring parts of the body. It was on the skin under the chin and about 5 centimeters from its anterior point. However, it was still clearly visible as a distinct line of increased pigmentation about 5 centimeters long and 5 millimeters wide (Figure 11-16). (My notes of 1971 record the width as only 3 millimeters, but I believe—and the photograph shows—that it was wider.)

Ravi Shankar must have stopped growing by 1971 (when he was 20 years old), if not earlier. In 1974 I again examined his birthmark and noted that it had not

changed position since 1971. I recorded the birthmark as then being about 4 centimeters long and 6 millimeters wide. It was still a flat linear area of hyperpigmentation.

The birthmark, in addition to changing its position, had also faded considerably since Ravi Shankar's infancy.

Comment

We can accept the date of Munna's murder as accurate because the judicial documents (which also described the finding of Munna's severed head at the site where he had been murdered) recorded the murder as having happened on January 19, 1951. I could not learn a date for Ravi Shankar's birth more precise than July 1951. However, I believe this date is accurate to within 2 or 3 weeks. This means that Ramdulari Gupta was about 3 months pregnant with Ravi Shankar at the time of Munna's murder.

Ravi Shankar's birthmark did not change in position only; its lateral parts faded away leaving a narrow band about 5 centimeters long near the midline. Munna's head was fully severed from his body, but he would have lost consciousness before his murderers had completed their grisly work. Presumably Munna was still conscious when the murderers first cut his throat, and I suggest that if they began to cut him at the front of his neck he would have been conscious of the wound there, but would have lost consciousness from loss of blood before they had extended the wound deeply.[10]

THE CASE OF BHOPAL SINGH

Summary of the Case and Its Investigation

Bhopal Singh was born in the village of Surajpur, Dt. Mainpuri, Uttar Pradesh, India, on November 20, 1968. His parents were Munshi Lal Singh and his wife, Dropa. Munshi Lal was a cultivator (of the Lodhi caste), and although he owned about five acres of land, his economic means were so meager that I considered him a member of the upper lower classes. He and his wife had had seven children up to the time of the investigation of this case in 1974. Bhopal was their fourth child. They had had a daughter and two sons older than Bhopal.

Soon after Bhopal's birth his parents noted birthmarks on his right neck (Figure 11-17) and back (Figure 11-18). Munshi Lal said that he had noticed the birthmarks within 2 weeks of Bhopal's birth. His wife, Dropa, said that she did not notice them until Bhopal was about 1 month old. She had an uncle, Hardyal

[10]Other subjects who remembered previous lives that ended in decapitation include Ma Thoung and Yusuf Köse. The previous personality in the (unverified) case of Maung Myint Aung cut his throat suicidally, and I think the birthmark on Ravi Shankar when he was born may have resembled that of Maung Myint Aung (Figures 4-4 and 4-5).

Singh, who had been murdered on March 23, 1968; and Bhopal's birthmarks corresponded to the bullet wounds on his body. This correspondence, together with a dream she had had during her pregnancy with Bhopal in which Hardyal had jumped on the roof of the house, led Bhopal's parents to conjecture that he might be the reincarnation of Hardyal. However, they remained unsure about this interpretation until after Bhopal began to speak.

Bhopal was barely walking and talking when he began to speak about a previous life. When he was about 1½ years old, he told his mother one day: "I am going to my home." When she asked where this was, he said "Sultannagar." He then gave out additional details of a life he was remembering. He said that his name had been Hardyal and that he had a real brother called Bhawani and a "cousin brother" called Ram Bharose. He also said that he had a wife and four children: two sons and two daughters. He did not state the wife's name to his parents. As to how he had died, Bhopal said that persons called Jamadar and Jodhan got him drunk, took him out by a canal, and shot him in the back and right side of the neck.

All these statements corresponded to details familiar to Bhopal's parents. Dropa's uncle Hardyal had lived at Sultannagar; and he had a real brother called Bhawani and a "cousin brother" called Ram Bharose. His body had been found near a canal. So it seemed clear, almost from the beginning of Bhopal's references to a previous life, that he was talking about Hardyal.

Word of what Bhopal was saying spread back to Ram Bharose at Sultannagar, and he came to talk with Bhopal in November 1970, when Bhopal was just 2 years old. Bhopal recognized Ram Bharose, but the latter, instead of questioning him in detail at his home, took him into the nearby town of Bhongaon. There he presented Bhopal to Balram Shastri, the tehsildar (government officer) of the area, who, as I mentioned in the report of Sunita Singh's case, published reports of about 10 cases in newspapers and magazines. A report of Bhopal's case that he published in *Bharat* on March 11, 1973, led to my learning about this case.

In the meantime Bhopal's mother had taken him to Sultannagar, where he had recognized several other members of Hardyal's family.

In January 1974, Parmeshwar Dayal (a psychologist of Allahabad who had been working with Dr. Jamuna Prasad and also assisting me for several years in the study of these cases) went to the area of the case and began its investigation. Parmeshwar Dayal did more than preliminary work on the case, because he interviewed eight informants for it: both of Bhopal's parents and his grandfather; and Hardyal's cousin brother (Ram Bharose), his wife, one of his daughters, a schoolteacher of Sultannagar, and the tehsildar, Balram Shastri. Parmeshwar Dayal also obtained a copy of the report of the postmortem examination on the body of Hardyal.

Dr. Satwant Pasricha and I continued the investigation of the case in October 1974. We concentrated mainly on a review with Bhopal's parents of what Bhopal had said when he was first speaking about the previous life and on an examination of his birthmarks. We interviewed both of Bhopal's parents and his maternal grandfather, who was Hardyal's brother; but we did not try to interview again the other members of Hardyal's family whom Parmeshwar Dayal had already met.

We also added to our dossier of the case a copy of relevant extracts from the report of Hardyal's murder, which we studied at the police station in Bhongaon.

In February 1983—after an interval of more than 8 years—Dr. Pasricha and I returned to the case, this time accompanied by Dr. Nicholas McClean-Rice. We wanted to learn about Bhopal's later development and also to fill some gaps in the information we had about the case. We interviewed both of Bhopal's parents. Bhopal, who was by this time a youth of more than 14 years, talked a little with us, although a surrounding crowd of villagers seemed to make him more shy than he might otherwise have been. In December 1983 Dr. Pasricha (with Dr. McClean-Rice and K.S. Rawat) went to Sultannagar, where they had a long interview with Hardyal Singh's widow, Kalawati. They also interviewed Chakravarti Singh, the headman of the village, who furnished information about the motives and other circumstances of Hardyal Singh's murder.

Persons Interviewed during the Investigation

In Surajpur we interviewed:

Munshi Lal Singh, Bhopal's father
Dropa Singh, Bhopal's mother
Bhawani, Dropa's father and Hardyal Singh's brother

In Sultannagar we interviewed:

Kalawati Singh, Hardyal Singh's widow
Rajrani, one of Hardyal Singh's daughters
Deshraj, a schoolteacher
Chakravarti Singh, headman of the village

In Mainpuri we interviewed:

Ram Bharose, one of Hardyal Singh's cousins
Balram Shastri, tehsildar of Bhongaon

I have not listed Bhopal himself as being interviewed, because this would have been misleading; he was extremely shy with us and cried much of the time during our 1974 visit to his home at Sultannagar. Even Dr. Pasricha, who is skilled in talking with young children, could learn nothing from him. However, Bhopal let his parents hold him for us to photograph his birthmarks. He talked with us in 1983, but by that time his memories of the previous life had largely faded.

Relevant Facts of Geography

The two immediate families concerned in the case were members of the same extended family. Bhopal's mother, Dropa, was Hardyal Singh's niece on her father's side.

The places concerned in the case are in the Mainpuri District of Uttar Pradesh. Mainpuri, at that time a city of about 100,000 inhabitants, is located approximately 105 kilometers northeast of Agra. To the north of Mainpuri is the town of Bhongaon, which is the seat for the tehsil (regional) administration of that part of the district. Surajpur, the village where Bhopal and his family lived, is about 3 kilometers north and slightly west of Bhongaon. It was a small village with fewer than 500 inhabitants. It lies west of a single-track branch railway line, which connects Mainpuri and the next large city to the north, Farrukhabad. Sultannagar, the village where Hardyal lived, is about another 5 kilometers farther north, but on the east side of the Mainpuri-Farrukhabad railway line.

The Life, Death, and Character of Hardyal Singh

Hardyal Singh was born in 1926 in Sultannagar, District Mainpuri. His parents were Lochan Singh and his wife, Bala. He had one brother, Bhawani; and he was close enough to a cousin, Ram Bharose, to regard the latter also as a brother.

Hardyal Singh married a girl called Kalawati, and they had two sons and two daughters. Hardyal entered the army, where his previously good character became softened as he came to like alcohol too much. He nevertheless reached the rank of *hawaldar* (roughly sergeant) before he left the army in 1947, when he was only 21. Afterward he joined the armed police force, and from constable he was promoted to the rank of hawaldar. However, in the police force he continued drinking too much alcohol, and he also gambled. He quarreled with an officer and as a consequence was reduced to the rank of constable. Later, he was dismissed from the police force. He then returned to his village of Sultannagar and tried to work as a farmer. (I should note here that the villagers of Sultannagar called Hardyal "Hawaldar," the rank that he had held both in the army and in the armed police.)

Unfortunately, Hardyal continued in his previous bad habits, and when he ran short of money, he added thievery to them. He was also known as a womanizer. He does not appear to have been convicted of any crime or even indicted for one. However, he had become a public nuisance, so that a group of villagers decided that he must be done away with. In the words of Ram Bharose: "It is said that the villagers were sick of him and got him killed." Discontent with Hardyal must have been widespread in the community, because one of his friends, Jamadar, was among the suspects arrested after Hardyal's murder. (Jamadar was also named as one of Hardyal's murderers by Bhopal.)

On March 24, 1968, Hardyal's body was discovered on a canal road near a place called Jeewanpur Barauli, about 5 kilometers north of Bhongaon, that is, roughly halfway between Surajpur and Sultannagar. He had been shot in three places sometime during the night of March 23-24. The police rounded up suspects: Jamadar, Jodhan, and Ahibaran. They were duly tried and acquitted. The police record (at Bhongaon Police Station) did not say why they were acquitted; but as I explained in Chapter 1, in the absence of eyewitnesses it was almost impossible to obtain a conviction for a murder in that part of India at that time. As the murder

occurred at night and away from Hardyal's village, it is almost certain that the only witnesses were the murderers themselves. As to how the murderers lured Hardyal from the relative security of his village I have no independent knowledge, but Bhopal furnished an explanation (items 14 and 15, Table 11-1) which, although not verified, accords with what we learned about Hardyal's character.

Hardyal's niece (and Bhopal's mother), Dropa, went to look at her uncle's dead body after it was found on the canal road; and she told us that she had seen his wounds.

The Report of the Postmortem on Hardyal Singh. From the report of the postmortem examination on the body of Hardyal Singh (performed on March 25, 1968) I quote the following extracts:

> Antemortem injuries:
>
> 1. Lacerated wound 1 and ¾ inches by 1 and ½ inches by 2 and ½ inches [deep] on the right side of the neck, 2 and ¾ inches below the right ear margin. Inverted with singeing of the wound margins. Injury directed downwards and to the left.
> 2. Lacerated wound ½ inch by ½ inch and into the abdominal cavity on the umbilicus margin. Inverted with singeing of the wound margins.
> 3. Lacerated wound ¾ inch by ¾ inch and penetrating into the abdominal cavity on the right side of the lower back, about ½ inch to 1 inch from the midline. Inverted with no singeing.
>
> Internal Examination:
>
> 1. 136 small pellets taken out from the soft parts of the left side of the neck at the back and middle.
> 2. First rib was broken.
> 3. About [illegible] of blood in right thoracic cavity.
> 4. Vessels on the right side of the neck lacerated below injury No. 1.
> 5. Abdominal walls. As described for injury No. 2.
> 6. Peritoneum: lacerated in two places.
> 7. Abdominal cavity: about ½ [illegible] of blood present.
>
> Death was caused by shock and hemorrhage.

Comment. From the details of the report of the postmortem examination we can plausibly reconstruct the sequence of events in the murder of Hardyal.

The wounds numbered 1. and 2. in the postmortem report were associated with singeing. This feature occurs when a gun is fired at close range, usually less than 50 centimeters from the victim's body (Gresham, 1984), although singeing may occur at distances up to 100 centimeters (Knight, 1983). The flame emitted from the gun's muzzle when the shell explodes causes the burning. In addition, the large size and the singleness of the wound described as wound Number 1 indicate firing at a close range. Applying the formula of Simpson and Knight (1947/1985, p. 81), which I mentioned in the report of Hanumant Saxena's case, we can estimate that the assailant fired the shotgun from a distance of not more

than 1.5 meters from Hardyal Singh's body. The limits of singeing suggest an even closer range.

In contrast, wound Number 3 was not associated with singeing. Moreover, it was (compared with wound Number 1) small. The wound on the neck from the shotgun was by far the largest of the three wounds. The wound in the abdomen was of approximately the size of the wound on the back. The singeing of the skin associated with wounds Number 1 and Number 2 shows that they were inflicted by weapons fired at close range. I believe therefore that Hardyal's murderers shot him first from a distance and from behind with a "countrymade" gun.[11] Its single bullet wounded him in the back and felled him. This shot made wound Number 3. The murderers then moved up close and finished him off with a shotgun blast on the right side of the neck, making wound Number 1. (The large number of pellets removed from the left side of the neck tell us that the shotshell was one ordinarily used for birds.) The assailants finally, for good measure, fired another gun (shot at close range) into Hardyal's abdomen, producing wound Number 2. (It is also possible that wound Number 2 was inflicted before wound Number 1.)

Statements and Recognitions Made by Bhopal

In Table 11-1 I have placed first (items 1-22) the statements that Bhopal made before Ram Bharose Singh, Hardyal Singh's cousin, came over from Sultannagar and took him to Bhongaon to meet Balram Shastri, the tehsildar. For some of these statements I have listed informants besides Bhopal's parents. This means that he made more or less the same statement to these persons after he had spoken about the item to his parents.

Items 23 and 24 occurred when Ram Bharose Singh came to see Bhopal in November 1970. It should be noted that Ram Bharose himself did not mention these items, although Parmeshwar Dayal seems not to have asked him specifically whether Bhopal had recognized him.

Bhopal was credited with a considerable number of recognitions that he made when, about 4 months after Ram Bharose's visit to Surajpur, Dropa Singh took him to Sultannagar. (Bhawani Singh, who was Dropa's father and Hardyal Singh's brother, was then still living at Sultannagar, although in 1974 he was staying with his daughter at Surajpur, when Parmeshwar Dayal and, later, Dr. Pasricha and I met him.) I have included five of these recognitions (items 25-29) for each of which two or more informants gave concordant testimony. I have, however, omitted the others, in order to conserve space and because, through my having insufficient detail about how they occurred, I think they add little to the evidence of the case.

[11]For economy and to avoid the necessity of a gun license Indian villagers sometimes use crude guns that are aptly described as "countrymade." Some of these are as hazardous to the person using them as to the intended target. They are put together in the regions where they are used. Such firearms would be distinguished from the weapons available to the police and army, which are manufactured in authorized arms factories.

Table 11-1. **Summary of Statements and Recognitions Made by Bhopal**

Item	*Informants*	*Verification*	*Comments*
1. His name was Hardyal.	Munshi Lal Singh, Bhopal's father Dropa Singh, Bhopal's mother	Bhawani Singh, Hardyal Singh's brother Kalawati, Hardyal Singh's widow	
2. He was a hawaldar.	Munshi Lal Singh	Bhawani Singh	Hardyal had had the rank of hawaldar, both in the army and the police force; but he was back in civilian life when he died. In her statement to Parmeshwar Dayal, Kalawati said Bhopal had been saying he was "tehsildar," but this may have been a slip on her part or in the note-taking.
3. He lived at Sultannagar.	Munshi Lal Singh Dropa Singh	Kalawati Police Records at Bhongaon	The police records incorrectly recorded the place as Sultan*ganj*, not Sultan*nagar*. All other informants referred to the village as Sultannagar.
4. He had a brother called Bhawani.	Munshi Lal Singh	Bhawani Singh	
5. He had a "cousin brother" called Ram Bharose.	Munshi Lal Singh	Ram Bharose Singh, Hardyal Singh's cousin	
6. He had a wife.	Munshi Lal Singh	Kalawati	Bhopal did not give the name of Hardyal's wife.
7. He had two sons.	Munshi Lal Singh	Kalawati	

8. His older son was called Veer Pal.	Munshi Lal Singh	Kalawati	
9. His younger son was called Om Pal.	Dropa Singh	Kalawati	
10. He had two daughters.	Munshi Lal Singh	Kalawati Rajrani Singh, Hardyal Singh's daughter	Rajrani said that Bhopal said that he had three daughters. In this count he included Dropa, Hardyal's niece, who was also Bhopal's mother. Just as Indians may refer loosely to cousins as brothers, so they may refer to nieces as daughters.
11. One daughter was called Dhan Devi.	Dropa Singh	Kalawati	
12. One daughter was called Rajrani.	Dropa Singh	Rajrani Singh	
13. He had been in service in Bareilly and Budaun.	Dropa Singh	Dropa Singh Ram Bharose Singh	This item refers to Hardyal's service in the armed police. Dropa said that Hardyal had served at Bareilly, but she did not mention Budaun. Conversely, Ram Bharose verified that Hardyal had been posted at Budaun, but did not mention Hardyal's posting at Bareilly. Bareilly and Budaun are moderately large cities north of Mainpuri in Uttar Pradesh.

Table 11-1 *(continued)*

Item	*Informants*	*Verification*	*Comments*
14. Jamadar and three or four persons asked him to participate in theft.	Dropa Singh	Unverified	
15. They gave him drinks.	Munshi Lal Singh Dropa Singh Ram Bharose Singh Kalawati	Unverified	In Dropa's account of this item to Parmeshwar Dayal, Bhopal had said that he "was made to drink wine." This element of compulsion in the drinking of wine occurred in some other versions of what Bhopal had said on this point. For example, Ram Bharose told Parmeshwar Dayal that Bhopal had said that "some persons and Jamadar had called him from his house and killed him after making him drink wine." (Ram Bharose was a secondhand informant for this report, which he attributed to Dropa.) Kalawati reported Bhopal in almost identical words as saying: "Jamadar called me from the house, made me drink wine, took me to the canal, and shot me dead."
16. They took him to the canal.	Munshi Lal Singh Dropa Singh	Ram Bharose Singh	Hardyal Singh's body was found on a canal road near Jeewanpur Barauli. Dropa went to see her uncle's body before it was removed by the police. She said that it was on the canal bank about 2 kilometers from Surajpur. (According to another estimate it was 5 kilometers from Surajpur.)

17. They killed him at Mota and Jeewanpur Barauli.	Munshi Singh Dropa Singh	Ram Bharose Singh Kalawati	See comment for preceding item. Munshi Lal Singh mentioned Jeewanpur Barauli only, Dropa both Jeewanpur [Barauli] and Mota.
18. Jamadar and Jodhan killed him.	Munshi Lal Singh	Unverified	Jamadar, Jodhan, and Ahibaran were three persons accused of murdering Hardyal. They were acquitted for lack of evidence.
19. He was killed while intoxicated.	Dropa Singh	Unverified	
20. He was shot in the lower back and the right side of the neck.	Munshi Lal Singh	Report of postmortem examination of Hardyal Singh's body	See text for variant reports of Bhopal's statements about where Hardyal was wounded.
21. They also beat him with sticks.	Dropa Singh	Unverified	The postmortem report mentioned no abrasions on the body, and no fractures except that of the first rib which the shotgun wound into the right neck would have caused. Hardyal's murderers, however, might have struck him with lathis or held him down with them while preparing to shoot him at close range.
22. He got his left hand broken.	Dropa Singh	Unverified	Bhopal made this statement immediately after that of the preceding item, as if the sticks (lathis probably) had fractured Hardyal's hand. The postmortem report mentioned no injury to either hand.

Table 11-1 *(continued)*

Item	*Informants*	*Verification*	*Comments*
23. Recognition of Ram Bharose Singh, Hardyal Singh's cousin	Munshi Lal Singh Dropa Singh		According to Munshi Lal and Dropa, Bhopal recognized Ram Bharose at the time he came to Surajpur, when Bhopal was just 2 years old. When Bhopal saw Ram Bharose, he said: "He is my brother, Ram Bharose." Ram Bharose himself did not recall, or did not mention to Parmeshwar Dayal, that Bhopal had recognized him. Parmeshwar Dayal's notes have no record that he asked Ram Bharose whether Bhopal had recognized him, so it is possible that Bhopal did recognize him and that he later forgot to mention it to Parmeshwar Dayal.
24. Ram Bharose was in service.	Munshi Lal Singh	Ram Bharose	According to Munshi Lal, Ram Bharose, after being recognized by Bhopal, asked him: "What did I do?" Bhopal replied: "You were in service." (This referred to the civil service in which Ram Bharose was employed.) Ram Bharose did not mention this item to Parmeshwar Dayal.
25. Recognition of Bhawani Singh, Hardyal Singh's brother	Bhawani Singh Ram Bharose Singh		This recognition occurred at the time of Bhopal's first visit to Sultannagar. On seeing Bhawani, Bhopal said: "You are Bhawani, my real brother." The use of the word *real* (in English transla-

		tions) indicates Bhopal's ability to distinguish the relationship Hardyal had to Bhawani from that he had to Ram Bharose, who was Hardyal's "cousin brother."
26. Recognition of Rajrani, Hardyal Singh's daughter	Bhawani Singh Rajrani Singh	This recognition also occurred at the time of Bhopal's first visit to Sultannagar. Bhopal said: "You are Rajrani, my daughter."
27. Recognition of Kalawati, Hardyal Singh's wife	Kalawati Ram Bharose Singh Rajrani Singh	This recognition also occurred at the time of Bhopal's first visit to Sultannagar. Kalawati asked Bhopal: "Who am I?" He became shy and said, as if to someone else: "She is my wife."
28. Recognition of Veer Pal, one of Hardyal Singh's sons	Bhawani Singh Kalawati	This recognition also occurred at the time of Bhopal's first visit to Sultannagar. Kalawati first asked Bhopal to give the names of Hardyal's sons, and he replied: "They are Veer Pal and Om Pal." Unfortunately, Kalawati then guided Bhopal in the recognition of the sons. She asked him to recognize "his" sons, who "were standing there." Bhawani Singh said that Bhopal indicated Veer Pal and said: "He is my son."
29. Recognition of Om Pal, the other of Hardyal's sons	Bhawani Singh Kalawati	This recognition occurred at the same time as the preceding one and under the same circumstances.

Although I have not included the details as a separate item in the table, I think it worth noting that Bhopal identified his mother, Dropa, as "his" niece. I have already mentioned in connection with item 10 that Bhopal at least sometimes included Dropa in his count of daughters (although she was actually Hardyal's niece). On one occasion Bhawani Singh—for what reason I do not know—pointed to Dropa and told Bhopal that she was his mother. At this Bhopal replied: "She is not my mother; she is my niece."

The various statements attributed to Bhopal concerning the parts of the body where Hardyal was wounded (with gunshots) deserve comment. In January 1974 Munshi Lal, talking with Parmeshwar Dayal, quoted Bhopal as having said that he was shot in the "stomach and temple." This set Parmeshwar Dayal to searching Bhopal's body for birthmarks in these areas, and he thought that he might have found some there, although I later could not. When Dr. Pasricha and I interviewed Munshi Lal 10 months later, on October 19, 1974, he then quoted Bhopal as having said that he had been shot in the "lower back and right side of the neck." This second statement, which I have adopted for item 20, Table 11-1, accords better than Munshi Lal's earlier statement with what other informants told Parmeshwar Dayal and also Dr. Pasricha and me about Bhopal's statements on this subject. For example, Dropa told Parmeshwar Dayal that Bhopal had referred to having been shot in the "back and head"; and she agreed with her husband's statement to Dr. Pasricha and me in October 1974. Ram Bharose Singh told Parmeshwar Dayal that Bhopal had said that he had been shot with "two bullets, one in the neck and the other in the back." Kalawati said Bhopal had spoken of being shot in the "back." I should add, however, that Balram Shastri (in his report of the case in *Bharat*, but not in his statement to Parmeshwar Dayal) said that Bhopal, when he talked about the previous life, "indicated the 'shooting mark' on his stomach." It seems likely therefore that at different times Bhopal by gestures and words showed that he had been wounded in the previous life in three different places: the back, the head or neck, and the abdomen.

Dropa was the only informant to mention Bhopal's reference to also being beaten with sticks, which she included in her statement to Parmeshwar Dayal only; she did not make any reference to beating during the interview Dr. Pasricha and I had with her in 1974.

Readers should remember that all our informants were trying to recall 3 or 4 years later what a young child had said when he was around 2 years of age. Almost certainly Bhopal—at that young age—pointed at the areas of his body that he wished to indicate as the sites of the wounds Hardyal had received. The adults around him may have furnished words for what he was trying to say. Moreover, Dropa had seen both the wounds on Hardyal's body after he was killed and the birthmarks on Bhopal. (Munshi Lal had seen only the birthmarks.) Both she and her husband were therefore more or less prepared for Bhopal to say that Hardyal had been shot in the several locations mentioned. However, it does not necessarily follow either that they put wrong words into his mouth or later remembered incorrectly what he had said.

It happened in this case that Dr. Pasricha and I had studied the postmortem report of the case before we interviewed Munshi Lal and Dropa; but I am sure that we did not influence their statements either about what Bhopal said concerning the wounds or about the location of the birthmarks on Bhopal, which I shall describe in a later section.

Bhopal's Behavior Related to the Previous Life

Circumstances and Manner of Bhopal's Speaking about the Previous Life. I learned of no special stimuli for Bhopal's references to the previous life. He began to make them when he was barely talking, and he continued for several years. By January 1974, when Bhopal was just over 5 years old, he was saying very little about the previous life and that, according to his father, Munshi Lal, only "after much persuasion." In October 1974 Munshi Lal told Dr. Pasricha and me that Bhopal had begun to talk less about the previous life about a year before, that is, in about October 1973, when he was just under 5 years old.

Munshi Lal, in 1974, cited some of Bhopal's statements, such as about his (previous) name and having a wife, as being spoken in the present tense, for example, "My name is Hardyal and I have a wife." However, Munshi Lal also said that Bhopal used the past tense when he referred to the previous life. I do not think these are incompatible statements. Bhopal—at least as soon as he learned the use of the past tense in Hindi—would have described with the past tense how Hardyal had been lured out of his house and murdered. At the same time, he would have continued to believe that the various people he identified as related to Hardyal had that same relationship—in the present—to him. In this way it would have seemed quite natural for him to say of Dropa "She *is* my niece" and of Rajrani "You *are* my daughter." With regard to Dropa, he was so confident that he knew her correct relationship that he called her *baitya* ("daughter") when he was quite young and only slowly learned to call her *amma* ("mother").

When Bhopal was asked his name of the previous life, he would sometimes answer "Hardyal" and sometimes "Hawaldar." For example, Munshi Lal in talking with Parmeshwar Dayal in January 1974 said that Bhopal had said: "My name is Hawaldar." (In October 1974, however, he told Dr. Pasricha and me that Bhopal had given the name "Hardyal" as his in the previous life.) Balram Shastri also said (to Parmeshwar Dayal) that Bhopal had said his name was "Hawaldar." I mentioned earlier that the villagers of Sultannagar had called Hardyal "Hawaldar," so it was appropriate for Bhopal to think of this word as the name he had in the previous life. Munshi Lal said that Bhopal had not asked to be called by a name other than Bhopal, but Rajrani, Hardyal's daughter, witnessed an occasion when he had. She said that once when he was playing with other children, one of them had called him "Bhopal," and he had replied: "My name is Hawaldar. I have two sons and three daughters." Munshi Lal told us that when Bhopal had been younger he would come when he was called either "Hardyal" or "Hawaldar."

Bhopal's Desire to Go to Sultannagar. Like many young subjects of these cases, Bhopal wished to go to the place of the previous life he remembered. Dropa said that his opening reference to the previous life, which he made at the age of 1½, was the announcement: "I am going home." When she asked: "Where?" he replied: "Sultannagar." Then he narrated details of how he had been killed in the previous life.

Bhopal repeatedly said that he wanted to go to Sultannagar. Sometimes he ran off in that direction by himself, but we did not learn that he had ever actually reached Sultannagar alone. In 1983 Dropa told us that he talked of going there to see his (previous) brother and wife.

Bhopal's Vengefulness toward Hardyal's Murderers. According to Munshi Lal, Bhopal said that he would revenge himself on Jamadar and Jodhan, using the words "I will do to them what they did to me—kill them."

Bhopal's Desire for Alcohol. In October 1974 Munshi Lal told us that Bhopal, who was then almost 6 years old, had never asked for alcohol. In 1983 we enquired about alcohol again, and Dropa said that Bhopal had asked for alcohol "when young." We failed to ask about his age when he had asked for alcohol, and it is possible that he developed a desire for it only in later childhood, after our interviews of 1974.

Munshi Lal told us that in Surajpur the customary intoxicant was not alcohol but *bhang* (a cannabis derivative), and Bhopal may not have had much opportunity to see alcohol.

Other Behavior of Bhopal Related to the Previous Life. Bhopal had no specific phobia, such as of firearms. (But there was only one gun in the whole of Surajpur, and up to 1974 he had never seen it.)

Other Relevant Behavior of Bhopal

It seemed to me that Bhopal had an extreme fear of strangers. He was certainly much more afraid of our group, which consisted (in 1974) of Dr. Pasricha, another interpreter (K. S. Yadav), an American student who was touring with us (John Russell), and myself, than nearly any other child subject whom I have met. Munshi Lal said that Bhopal had a general fear of strangers, and as two of us were Americans, we were more clearly strangers than most persons coming to the village from outside.

The Attitude of the Adults Concerned toward Bhopal's Memories

Munshi Lal and Dropa seem not to have been particularly concerned one way or another by Bhopal's claims to remember the life of Dropa's uncle. They had apparently done nothing either to encourage or to suppress his memories when he first began to speak about them. However, when he was a little under 2½ years, Balram Shastri advised Munshi Lal and Dropa to help Bhopal forget the previous life by beating him. I never met Balram Shastri, but he appears to have shared in a belief widespread in northern India (and some other countries) that it is unhealthy

for children to remember previous lives. Munshi Lal and Dropa followed this advice, but the beatings did not take effect immediately, and, as I mentioned above, Bhopal went on talking spontaneously about the previous life for another 2½ years. And even after that period he continued occasionally to speak about it.

These measures of suppression had nothing to do with the acceptance by Bhopal's parents of the genuineness of his memories. Dropa said that she was quite convinced from what Bhopal had said that he was her uncle Hardyal reincarnated.

The question arose in my mind of why, if Bhopal *was* Hardyal reincarnated, he was born as Dropa's child instead of that of some other mother. In answer to questions bearing on this matter Dropa said that she had not been particularly attached to her uncle Hardyal. She had felt more attached to other uncles. She added, however, that Hardyal had been attached to her. Dropa's viewing of her murdered uncle's dead body deserves mention in this connection because of other cases (some included in this work) in which the subject's mother (or father) has gone to see the dead body of the person whose life their child later recalled.

Bhopal's Birthmarks

I have already mentioned that Parmeshwar Dayal thought that he had identified birthmarks on Bhopal's abdomen and on his left temple. According to Dropa, the marks that Parmeshwar Dayal saw (which I also examined) were not congenital but acquired postnatally. She said that she had noticed about a month after Bhopal's birth a mark on his right neck (Figure 11-17) and one on his back (Figure 11-18).

The mark on Bhopal's right neck was (in 1974) located just above his right clavicle. It was irregular in shape, very roughly round, and measured about 2 centimeters in diameter. It was puckered. Dropa said that when Bhopal was born, the mark had been higher on his neck, but it had moved downward as he grew. She indicated a location about halfway between the ear and the clavicle. It corresponded in location to wound Number 1 of the postmortem report.

The mark on Bhopal's back (Figure 11-18) was in the midline and about 8 centimeters below a line joining the tops of Bhopal's shoulders. This mark was almost perfectly round, slightly depressed, and slightly puckered. It was about 5 millimeters in diameter. Dropa said that when Bhopal was born, this mark was considerably lower on his back and had moved upward. It corresponded to wound Number 3 of the postmortem report. (A more prominent mark seen in the photograph over Bhopal's right scapula is not a birthmark, but the scar of a postnatal lesion.)

Figure 11-19 shows round bullet wounds of entry in a person murdered in Virginia.

Figure 11-20 reproduces a sketch that I made in 1974 showing the location of the two birthmarks in 1974 and Dropa's indication of their position when she first noticed them about a month after Bhopal's birth. Although the notes on the sketch state that the birthmark on the back was hyperpigmented, this feature does not appear in Figure 11-18.

Figure 11-17 Birthmark on the right neck of Bhopal Singh as it appeared in October 1974, when he was not quite 6 years old. The birthmark was a scarlike area of irregular shape but somewhat round and about 2 centimeters in diameter. It was located in the hollow just superior to the clavicle.

Dropa said that both birthmarks had faded and that their size had changed. Neither of these two marks had bled or oozed when Bhopal was born.

Bhopal told us (in 1983) that he had not felt any pain in the areas of his birthmarks.

Bhopal's Later Development

In February 1983 Bhopal was just over 14 years old. He was attending school and apparently doing well. (I am unable to give for his class the equivalent grade of a Western school, and so I do not know whether he was at the level of his peers.) His father said that Bhopal was the most intelligent of all his children.

I explained earlier that a surrounding crowd of curious villagers probably inhibited Bhopal from talking with us as much as he might otherwise have done. In contrast to the fright we gave him in 1974, he was seemingly content to be with us and cooperated patiently with my photography. He just said almost nothing.

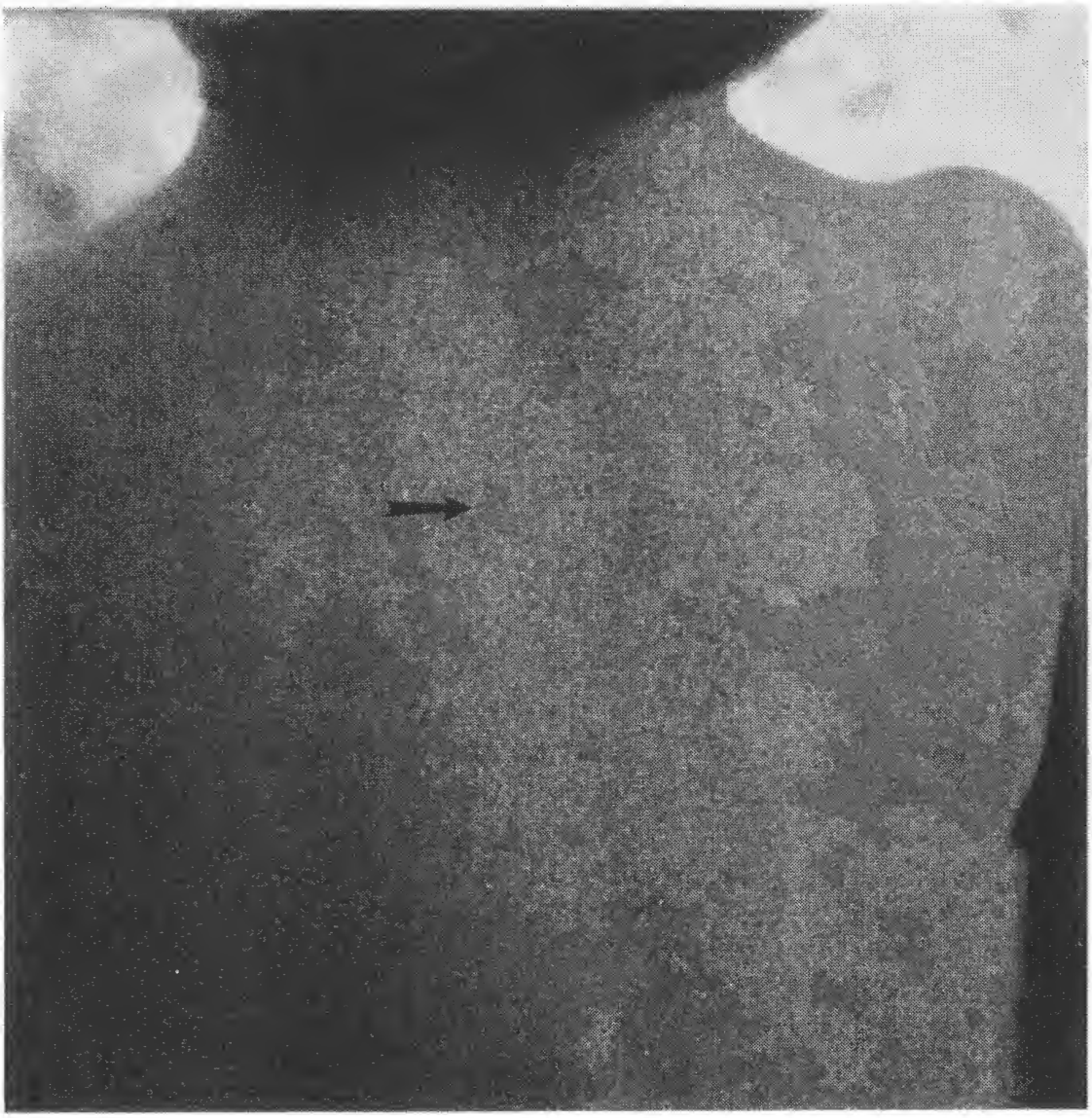


Figure 11-18 Birthmark on the back of Bhopal Singh as it appeared in October 1974, when he was not quite 6 years old. The birthmark was an almost perfectly round, slightly depressed and slightly puckered area in the midline. It was about 5 millimeters in diameter. (A more prominent scar over the right scapula was from a postnatal lesion.)

Bhopal did say that he had forgotten the previous life. Munshi Lal, his father, however, said that he still sometimes alluded to it; and he still sometimes said: "I am Hawaldar."

There was a chance in our interviews of 1983 to detect some variations between what Munshi Lal and Dropa had told us in 1974 and what they remembered in 1983. For example, in 1974 Dropa had not told us about the dream she had about Hardyal when she was pregnant with Bhopal; but this figured in her memories of 1983. Another discrepancy occurred in Munshi Lal's statement about how Bhopal had come to forget most of the memories of the previous life. In 1974 Munshi Lal had credited this to their having beaten Bhopal at the suggestion of Balram Shastri.

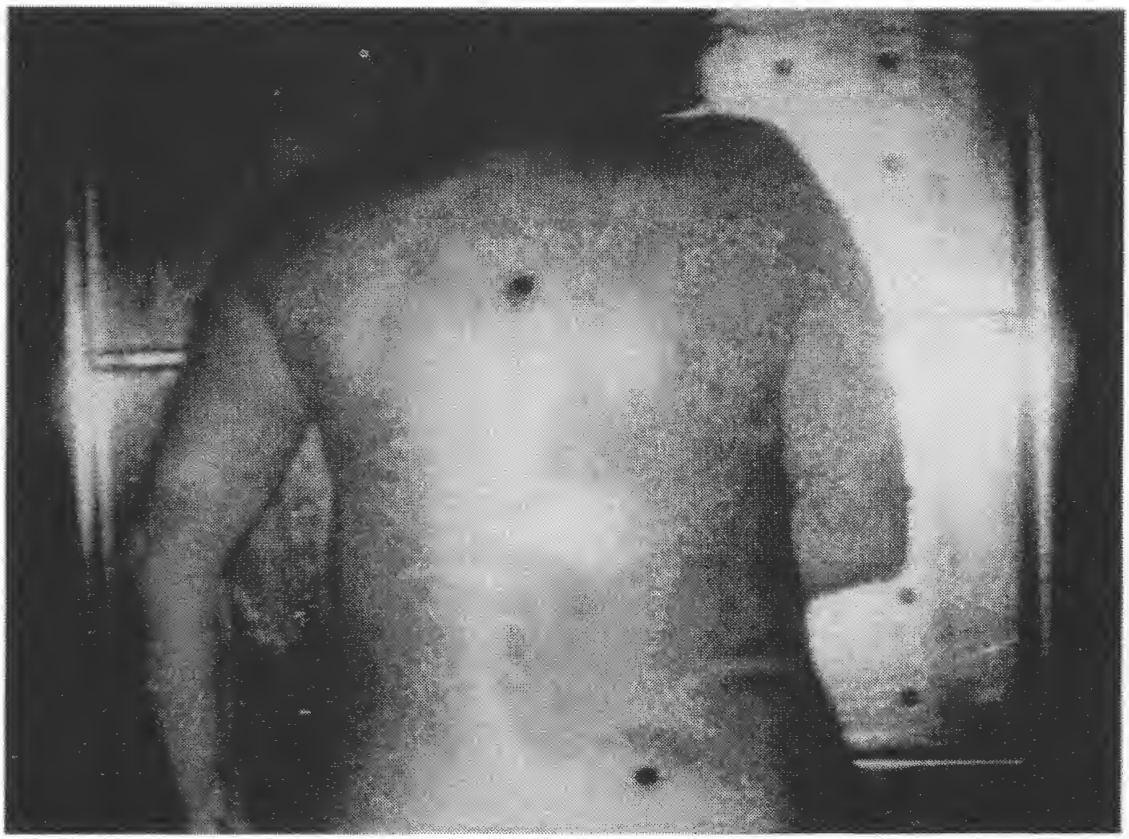
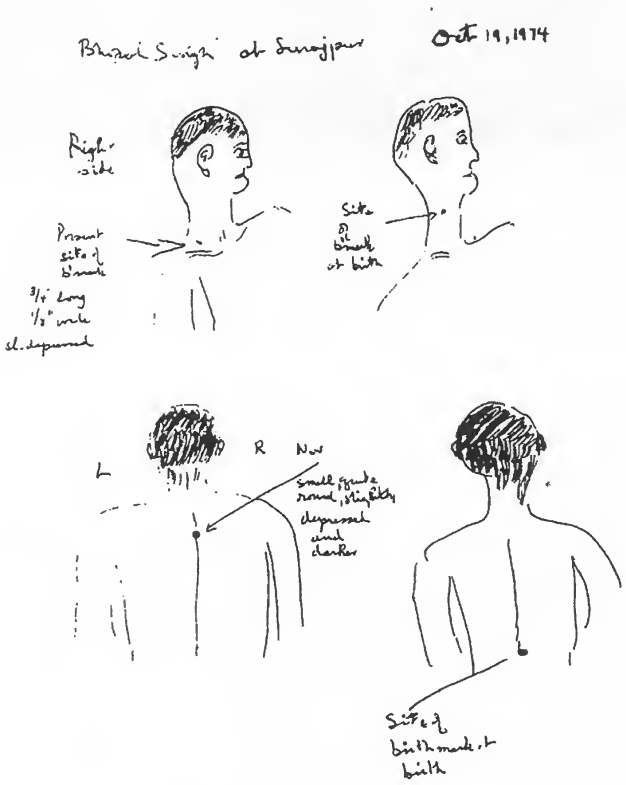


Figure 11-19 Round entry wounds of bullets that killed a person murdered in Virginia, shown for comparison with Figure 11-18. (Courtesy of Dr. David Wiecking.)

Figure 11-20 Sketches made in 1974 showing the location of the birthmarks on Bhopal's neck and back at his birth and at the age of nearly 6.



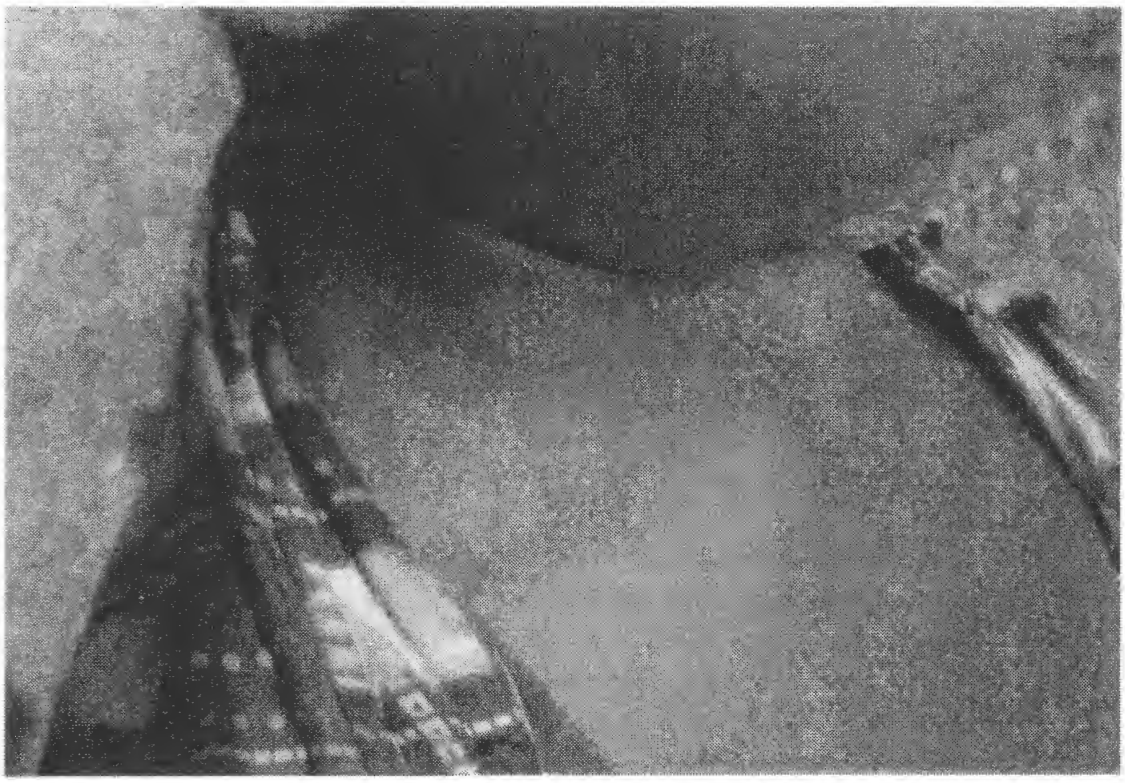


Figure 11-21 Supraclavicular area of Bhopal Singh in February 1983, when he was just over 14 years old. The birthmark visible in 1974 had completely disappeared.

In 1983 he said nothing about beatings and attributed the fading of Bhopal's memories to their having stopped asking him questions about the previous life.

Both the birthmarks that we had observed in 1974 had entirely faded. Figure 11-21 shows the supraclavicular fossa where one birthmark had been still visible in 1974. No trace of it remained in 1983.

Comment

Bhopal's case has a significant feature additional to the movement and fading of his birthmarks. I refer to its membership in the group of cases in which the previous personality had more wounds than the subject had birthmarks. On Dropa's evidence (and despite Balram Shastri's comment about a "shooting mark" on Bhopal's stomach), Bhopal had no birthmark on his abdomen where the postmortem report had recorded a gunshot wound on Hardyal Singh. In Chapter 14 I discuss the possible importance of this feature, which I have found in some other cases.

DISCUSSION OF THE MOVEMENT OF BIRTHMARKS

Before discussing the relative movement of some birthmarks, I wish to repeat that these are a small minority of all that I have investigated. The infor-

mants for most cases stated that the birthmark had *not* changed in location since the subject's birth.

At one stage in the development of this work I believed that I would be able to understand the changes in relative location of those few that do change their position. I thought we could attribute such changes to differential growth of the various parts of the body, which the diagrams from Stratz (1909) (Figures 11-13 to 11-15) nicely illustrate. This matter must, however, be less simple than I thought it was.

Ravi Shankar Gupta and Bhopal Singh were both born with birthmarks said to have been at about the middle of the neck. Yet as they grew older, Ravi Shankar's birthmark moved up and came to rest, so to speak, on the under surface of his chin; in contrast, Bhopal's birthmark moved down and faded away in the supraclavicular fossa.

Similar discordances occurred in the relative movement of birthmarks on the chest and back. The birthmark on Nasruddin Shah's chest moved down, that on Hanumant Saxena's chest moved up. The birthmark on Corliss Chotkin, Jr.'s back moved down, that on Bhopal Singh's back moved up.

These variations may derive from different penetrations of the birthmark beneath the epidermis into the dermis and even into tissues beneath the skin, such as muscle. The relative movements of such deeper tissues may influence and even dominate the location of the visible birthmark.

A day may come when biopsies will enable us to study the histological features of the birthmarks. Until that time observations of the relative movements of birthmarks have only the single significance to which I drew attention in Chapter 1. This is that when parents or other adults report such relative change in location of the birthmark since the subject's birth, we have some evidence—certainly not proof—that the birthmark was first observed at or soon after the subject's birth.

12

Correspondences of Details between Birthmarks and Related Wounds or Other Marks on Deceased Persons

INTRODUCTION

In previous chapters of this work I have given most attention to the correspondence of location between birthmarks on the subjects and wounds on the deceased persons of whom they (usually) had imaged memories. In the present chapter I describe, with illustrations from additional cases, some ways in which morphological details of the subject's birthmarks correspond to similar details in the wounds or other marks on the concerned previous personality.

I have already drawn attention to some of these correspondences of detail. Three occurred in connection with birthmarks related to surgical operations. The birthmark on Muhittin Yılmaz was a horizontal, narrow linear mark having the location and appearance of the scar of an operation on the gall bladder or other nearby organs. Susumu Ogura had a crescentic birthmark behind his ear that corresponded with the standard crescentic incision for mastoidectomy. Ma Choe Hnin Htet had a long linear birthmark near the midline of her lower chest and upper abdomen that corresponded to the standard incision for cardiac surgery.

Another example of correspondence of detail, with a different type of origin in the previous life, occurred in the case of Maung Hla Win. The birthmark on his foot was in an unusual location, but even more unusual was the bandlike extension of the birthmark around the side of the foot onto the sole; this corresponded to the mark made with soot on the foot of the deceased boy whose life Maung Hla Win remembered.

Still another example occurred in the case of Maung Myint Aung, who said that in the previous life he had been a Japanese soldier in Burma who slit his throat to avoid being captured by the advancing British Army during World War II. Maung Myint Aung's statements are unverified, but his birthmark had a close resemblance to the almost standard slashes across the front of the neck made by people who commit suicide by cutting their own throats.

Correspondences in detail also occur in the numerous cases in which the subject had two birthmarks, one corresponding to a bullet wound of entry and a second corresponding to a bullet wound of exit. In Table 12-1 I list 12 cases described in this work to which I have added 2 other cases less thoroughly investigated by myself and 4 cases investigated by my assistants and colleagues. The importance of these 18 cases does not derive only from the occurrence of two birthmarks on the subject. They have additional interest because in 14 of the 18 cases one birthmark was larger than the other. The smaller birthmark was usually round or roundish, the larger one less regular in shape. In one of the 4 exceptional cases the bullet did not exit, and in another the second birthmark had faded before I examined the subject. Here I must add the cautioning comment that 3 cases were completely unverified, and in 2 others that were solved the informants could not say clearly where the bullet had entered the deceased person's body. Even deducting these 5 cases, however, we are left with 9 (verified) cases in which a birthmark corresponding to the wound of entry was smaller than a birthmark corresponding to the wound of exit. This detail accords with the fact that bullet wounds of exit are nearly always larger than wounds of entry (Di Maio, 1985; Fackler, 1988; Fatteh, 1976; Gordon and Shapiro, 1982; Simpson and Knight, 1947/1985). However, forensic pathologists know that the size of the wound of exit depends on such variables as the velocity of the bullet, whether it becomes deformed in passage through the body, whether it tumbles within the body, whether it strikes bony tissues that it pushes with it to the point of exit, and others (Fatteh, 1976; Simpson and Knight, 1947/1985). Although exit wounds are usually larger than entry ones, they may not be, and occasionally an exit wound may even be smaller than the related entrance wound. This reversal of the usual sizes of the wounds occurs when the gun is discharged in contact with the victim (Gordon and Shapiro, 1982) or at close range (Simpson and Knight, 1947/1985). These conditions pertained in the cases of Alan Gamble, Cemil Fahrici, Tali Sowaid, and Metin Köybaşı, but not in the other cases. In the last of these four cases, the bullet did not exit, but in the first three it traversed bony tissues, which, pushed ahead of the bullet, produced an exit wound larger than the entrance wound. (I have to acknowledge here that for the cases of Alan Gamble and Tali Sowaid I have reasoned backward from birthmarks to wounds.)

Table 12-1. **Cases with Two Birthmarks Corresponding to Bullet Wounds of Entry and Exit**

Subject	*One Birthmark Larger than the Other*	*Larger Birthmark Corresponded to Bullet Wound of Exit*	*Comments*
1. Henry Elkin	Yes	Yes	Unverified case.
2. Chanai Choomalaiwong	Yes	Yes	
3. Maung Tin Win	Yes	Yes	Verified at second hand.
4. Cemil Fahrici	Yes	Yes	
5. Tali Sowaid	Yes	Yes	Medical record.
6. Alan Gamble	Yes	Yes	Medical record.
7. Frank Dudley	Not known	---	Birthmark corresponding to exit wound faded as subject grew.
8. Maung Sein Win	Yes	Uncertain	Unverified case. No information about which birthmark corresponded to exit wound.
9. Metin Köybaşı	No	---	Bullet arrested at skin; did not exit.
10. Umar Khan	Yes	Not known	Unverified case. Cause of death conjectured; subject made no statement about it.
11. B. B. Saxena	No	---	Unverified case.

Table 12-1. *(continued)*

Subject	*One Birthmark Larger than the Other*	*Larger Birthmark Corresponded to Bullet Wound of Exit*	*Comments*
12. Semihe Atasoy	Not known	Not known	Birthmarks had faded and were only faintly visible when case was investigated. Size of wounds of entry not given in postmortem report.
13. Ahmet Siray	Yes	Yes	Not independently verified.
14. Chidiebere Udenta	Yes	Uncertain	Testimony was unclear as to which birthmark corresponded to wound of exit.
15. Sabahattin Büyükaşık	Yes	Uncertain	Not independently verified. Sabahattin at the age of 14 could not remember at which site the bullet had entered. Case studied by Dr. Can Polat.
16. Ma Mar Aye	Yes	Yes	Case studied by Daw Hnin Aye.
17. Toran Singh	Yes	Yes	Medical record. Case studied by Dr. Antonia Mills (1989).
18. Nihayet Düzel	Yes	Yes	Size and location of wounds not independently verified. Case studied by Dr. Jürgen Keil.

The cases with birthmarks corresponding to holes pierced for earrings (described in Chapter 8) form another group with correspondences of details: They often consist of two or more marks or small depressions symmetrically placed close together on the helices of both ears.

In the remainder of this chapter I present cases that show other types of correspondence in detail between wounds and birthmarks. I have grouped them according to the types of wounds on the previous personalities. I begin with two examples of shotgun wounds. After these I describe two cases involving surgical procedures, four involving deaths from wounds of knives, axes, and spears, and three in which the previous personality died from snakebite. I conclude the chapter with an account of birthmarks apparently corresponding to pressure on the body from heavy bamboo poles (lathis).

THE CASE OF MA MU MU

Summary of the Case and Its Investigation

Ma Mu Mu was born on July 29, 1949, in the village of Nyaung-gaing, near Tatkon, Upper Burma. Her parents were U Aung Ba and Daw Nge Ma. They subsequently had another child, also a daughter.

Before Daw Nge Ma conceived Ma Mu Mu, U Aung Ba had a dream in which a deceased relative, Daw Ngwe Khin, sat on his knees and said that she was coming to live with him and Daw Nge Ma. Ma Mu Mu was born about 9 months after this dream.

When Ma Mu Mu was born, she was observed to have two prominent birthmarks at the upper, inner part of her left breast (Figures 12-1 and 12-2). The two birthmarks were both round, but of different sizes. Since Daw Ngwe Khin had been fatally wounded in the chest (in 1945), Ma Mu Mu's birthmarks gave a further confirmation to her parents' supposition that she was Daw Ngwe Khin reborn as their child.

Ma Mu Mu did not speak coherently until the rather late age of about 3. Soon after she began speaking, she began to refer to the life of Daw Ngwe Khin and described how she had been killed. Although Ma Mu Mu appears to have had some memories of the life of Daw Ngwe Khin when she was about 3 years old, she experienced a sort of flooding of such memories during a severe illness when she was about 7. At that time, she went to visit Daw Ngwe Khin's parents and, while with them, became ill with fever and delirium. In these circumstances she remembered many more details of the life of Daw Ngwe Khin.

Ma Mu Mu spent some months, and possibly longer, with Daw Ngwe Khin's family. She was then sent to Rangoon for a better education than she could obtain in her village in Upper Burma. She studied in Rangoon for 6 or 7 years. At the age of about 14 she left school and married.

Ma Mu Mu's case was one of the first that I investigated in Burma. U Win Maung first learned of it in February 1971, when he recorded a lengthy deposition about the case by Ma Hnin Aye, who was the adopted daughter of Daw Ngwe Khin.

U Win Maung also had an interview with Ma Mu Mu herself a few days later. In the following month, March 1971, I met and talked with Ma Mu Mu. I also interviewed Ma Hnin Aye and two other new informants for the case. These were U Kyauk Tin, Daw Ngwe Khin's brother, and U Pe Than Maung, Ma Hnin Aye's husband.

In 1972 U Win Maung and I met Ma Mu Mu again in order to take better photographs of her birthmark. We did not meet her after this occasion.

On August 15, 1978, U Win Maung had a third interview (about details of Daw Ngwe Khin's death) with Ma Hnin Aye, who was married to U Win Maung's stepbrother, U Pe Than Maung.

On April 2, 1979, U Win Maung and I had another interview with U Kyauk Tin, this time in Tatkon. At this meeting we were mainly concerned with the details of the shotgun and ammunition that had figured in the shooting of Daw Ngwe Khin.

On March 13, 1980, U Win Maung and I had a long talk (at Tatkon) with Daw Nge Ma, Ma Mu Mu's mother. She was able to fill in some gaps in the information already obtained about the case. She informed us also that Ma Mu Mu had had cardiac surgery in Rangoon and had died in about October 1979.

Persons Interviewed during the Investigation

In Rangoon I interviewed:

Ma Mu Mu
Ma Hnin Aye, Daw Ngwe Khin's adopted daughter
U Pe Than Maung, Ma Hnin Aye's husband
U Kyauk Tin, Daw Ngwe Khin's brother

In Tatkon I interviewed:

Daw Nge Ma, Ma Mu Mu's mother

I also had a second interview with U Kyauk Tin in Tatkon.

Ma Hnin Aye was only about 6 years old when her adoptive mother died. Much of her testimony was therefore secondhand. U Kyauk Tin, who was born in 1913, was a witness both for Daw Ngwe Khin's death and for the presence of the marks on Ma Mu Mu's breast at her birth. He was also an informant for some of the statements and recognitions that Ma Mu Mu made when she was a child.

It happened that U Win Maung's father, U San, had moved (when he retired) to Okshitgone village, which is close to Magyibin, the village where Daw Ngwe Khin was killed. U San kept a diary, and an entry in it describes and laments the accidental death of Daw Ngwe Khin the night before.

Relevant Facts of Geography and Possibilities for Normal Means of Communication between the Two Families

The two families in this case lived in nearby villages and were related. Daw Ngwe Khin was the daughter of U Hla Gyaw and Daw Sein Mya of Magyibin vil-

lage. Ma Mu Mu's father, U Aung Ba, who lived in Nyaung-gaing, was the son of U Hla Gyaw's first cousin. Nyaung-gaing and Magyibin are about 2 kilometers apart. They are within the township of Tatkon, which is an important market town in Upper Burma, about 400 kilometers north of Rangoon.

Because of the relationship and acquaintance between the two families, we should consider most of Ma Mu Mu's statements about the life of Daw Ngwe Khin as being within the normal knowledge of her parents and probably, therefore, also within her normal knowledge. I shall mention some possible exceptions to this restriction later.

The Life and Death of Daw Ngwe Khin

Daw Ngwe Khin was born in Magyibin in about 1903. Her parents (as I mentioned above) were U Hla Gyaw and his wife, Daw Sein Mya, and she was their oldest child. U Hla Gyaw was a headman of the village of Magyibin and considered a prosperous person in his area. Daw Ngwe Khin never married and lived all her life with her parents.

Sometime in 1940 Daw Ngwe Khin adopted an infant girl, Ma Hnin Aye, who was the daughter of U Hla Gyaw's younger brother.

In the spring of 1945, the Japanese Army was retreating in Upper Burma under the pressure of the advancing British and American armies. As the Japanese withdrew, a vacuum of authority occurred, and local bands of insurgents, who were really dacoits, preyed on the honest villagers. (See Appendix B.) The Japanese themselves also robbed the villages as they retreated. In addition, the British and American air forces were strafing the area. For these various reasons, many of the villages became uninhabitable during this period of anarchy. For their better protection, the villagers of the area of Magyibin developed hutments outside the villages. Some or all of the villagers would take refuge in these hutments.

One night during this period of confusion, Daw Ngwe Khin had been staying with friends in a neighboring village and was not with her father. A robbery occurred in another village from which the sound of gunfire was heard at Magyibin. U Hla Gyaw expected that the dacoits would next come to rob Magyibin. So he and his cousin, U Maung Maung, stayed inside the village to defend it. The villagers who had been outside Magyibin in the hutments thought, wrongly as it turned out, that the dacoits were planning to attack *them*. They therefore decided to get back into the village. Daw Ngwe Khin was among this group. She went toward Magyibin with her 6-year-old adopted daughter, Ma Hnin Aye, on her hip. Early in the morning, but while it was still dark, they ran toward the village. As the party approached the village, U Hla Gyaw and U Maung Maung could not see well in the darkness and mistook the returning villagers for the dacoits. U Hla Gyaw told U Maung Maung that the people who were running toward them might be their own villagers; but U Maung Maung panicked, and, without waiting to identify the group, fired both barrels of his gun at the same time. Daw Ngwe Khin and two other women were wounded.

After the firing, U Hla Gyaw heard a child crying and went to investigate. He and U Maung Maung were horrified to find that U Maung Maung had fired on members of their own village.

Daw Ngwe Khin was wounded in the chest.[1] She lived a few minutes, long enough to ask if her child had been hurt. (Ma Hnin Aye had not been hurt.)

The fatal shots were fired from a double-barreled shotgun using a cartridge of the type known as SSG (Sporting Shot Gun). The cartridges contained pellets of two different sizes, one about twice the size of the other.

According to U San's diary, Daw Ngwe Khin died on April 28, 1945.

U Maung Maung, Daw Ngwe Khin's cousin who had fired the shot that killed her, was described as going mad with remorse and grief, and he died within a year of the accident.

I only learned a little about Daw Ngwe Khin's personality. She was gentle and even docile. She was a skillful weaver of rugs. U San added the following note in his diary after he described her death:

> Daw Ngwe Khin was most friendly to us. She often served us with lavish and excellent meals. She had begged us to take her with us whenever we moved out of the village to evade the insurgents. Probably she would not have died if we did. We forgot her completely when we moved out in our excitement.

An Announcing Dream

As I mentioned, U Aung Ba dreamed that Daw Ngwe Khin came to him, sat on his knees, and said that she was coming to live with him and Daw Nge Ma. Ma Hnin Aye and U Kyauk Tin testified independently concerning the date of this dream. They both said that it occurred just before Daw Nge Ma became pregnant with Ma Mu Mu. Ma Hnin Aye was a young child of only about 10 years at this time; so her testimony is perhaps less important than U Kyauk Tin's. He remembered that U Aung Ba "told the rest of the family immediately after [he had the dream]."

Statements and Recognitions Made by Ma Mu Mu

Under this heading I shall first summarize what Daw Nge Ma, Ma Hnin Aye, and U Kyauk Tin said about the statements and recognitions Ma Mu Mu

[1]In connection with the case of Hanumant Saxena I mentioned the estimate we can make of the range at which a shotgun has been fired from the dispersion of pellets striking the victim. Daw Ngwe Khin was wounded only on the chest. Because no other pellets wounded her elsewhere, we know that they had spread widely by the time they reached her. This accords with the evidence we have that U Maung Maung fired at the returning villagers when they were still some distance from him, perhaps 20 meters or more.

In the other cases of this work involving shotgun wounds the shotgun was discharged at a much closer range than in the present case.

made when she was a young child. After, I shall report the more important features of Ma Mu Mu's own account of her memories that she gave U Win Maung and me in 1971.

According to Daw Nge Ma (Ma Mu Mu's mother), Ma Mu Mu gave an account of the death of Daw Ngwe Khin when she was about 3½ years old. Ma Mu Mu said that

> she had a very bad time when she was staying near Magyibin Railway Station. She then moved into the village, but continued to have a bad time. She was shot while she was coming into the village with her child in her arms. The child was unhurt [but] she died. It was an adopted child called Kyar Hla. ["Kyar Hla" was the pet name of Ma Hnin Aye, Daw Ngwe Khin's adopted daughter.]

Ma Mu Mu's references to being near the Magyibin Railway Station apparently referred to an attempt by some of the Magyibin villagers to make themselves safe near the station, which is about 1 kilometer west of the village. (I have not verified this movement of the villagers.) The hutments, to which I referred above and where the villagers also tried to gain safety, were just east of the village.

Ma Mu Mu showed the birthmark on her left breast at the time she narrated how she had died in the previous life.

The informants credited Ma Mu Mu with a number of other statements and recognitions pertinent to her memories of the life of Daw Ngwe Khin. She told Ma Hnin Aye that she (Ma Mu Mu) was her mother. She was able to indicate the place where some "buried treasure"[2] had been located. She recognized a photograph of Daw Ngwe Khin and said it was of "herself." This was not so remarkable as her correctly stating that the photograph had been taken at the Wahain Photo Studio in Mandalay. At the time she recognized this photograph, she had not yet started school and could not have read the inscriptions on the mount around the photograph. (I should note that Ma Hnin Aye was a secondhand informant for this

[2]Buried or hidden treasure figures often in Asian cases of the reincarnation type, but this reflects a common custom in Asia, not a peculiarity of the cases. Because banks are accessible only to a comparatively small number of Asians, and trusted by an even smaller number, many of the inhabitants of Asia, especially villagers, prefer to hide their surplus wealth. They may put it into a pot or tin can that is then buried in the ground or hidden in a wall. Coins, jewelry, and sometimes banknotes, or other property of value may be concealed in this manner. The owners often tell no one where they have put the treasure, although they usually intend to inform someone else about it before they die. Other members of the owner's family may know where he or she has hidden the treasure, but persons outside the family, even residents of the same village, would rarely or never learn about the hiding place. Thus if a child who claims to remember a previous life can correctly locate treasure that the person whose life he claims to have lived has buried, his case receives additional credit, often considerable, among those who witness his doing this. For other examples of hidden treasure figuring in these cases, see the reports of the cases of Bishen Chand Kapoor, Shanti Devi, Disna Samarasinghe, Savitri Devi Pathak, Maung Win Aung, and Nasruddin Shah.

item; Ma Mu Mu first spoke to Ma Khin Nu [Ma Hnin Aye's adoptive sister], who informed Ma Hnin Aye about it soon afterward.)

Ma Mu Mu was also able to distinguish the possessions of Daw Ngwe Khin from others like them. U Kyauk Tin said that she was able to identify a rug that Daw Ngwe Khin had woven; it had remained unused since her death.

Ma Mu Mu's Statements in 1971. In 1971 Ma Mu Mu still remembered that she had recognized Daw Ngwe Khin's photographs and had explained to adults in Magyibin that she was Daw Ngwe Khin. She recalled that she had told Daw Ngwe Khin's family where she (Daw Ngwe Khin) had buried treasure; but she did not know whether they had dug it out or not. She told them also how she had died of gunshot wounds. (Ma Mu Mu made an error in giving the name of the man who fired the shot that wounded and killed Daw Ngwe Khin; but it seems that she had earlier given the name of U Maung Maung correctly.) She remembered that Daw Ngwe Khin was carrying Ma Hnin Aye, her adopted daughter, on her right side.[3] She remembered also that she did not die instantly after she was wounded. She had time to ask her family and the people around her to look after her child.

Ma Mu Mu did not claim to remember Daw Ngwe Khin's funeral or to have any memories of the period between Daw Ngwe Khin's death and her own birth.

Ma Mu Mu's Behavior Related to the Previous Life

Circumstances and Manner of Ma Mu Mu's Speaking about the Previous Life. Daw Nge Ma, Ma Mu Mu's mother, had said that Ma Mu Mu first spoke of the previous life when she was between 3 and 3½ years old. Ma Hnin Aye said that Ma Mu Mu began to speak about the previous life when she was about 4, or perhaps a little younger. (Ma Hnin Aye was herself about 14 at that time.) U Kyauk Tin thought that Ma Mu Mu was even younger—aged 3—when she first spoke about the previous life. He said that she had asked to be taken to Magyibin because her mother (meaning of the previous life) was there. U Kyauk Tin recalled that Ma Mu Mu spoke about the previous life only spontaneously and could not be forced to speak about it if she did not wish to do so. However, in 1971 Ma Mu Mu did not remember that she had had any memories before an occasion when, at the age of between 6 and 7, she visited the home of Daw Ngwe Khin in Magyibin. Both Ma Hnin Aye and U Kyauk Tin said that Ma Mu Mu experienced a marked increase in memories when she first went to Magyibin. Since Ma Mu Mu (in 1971) still seemed to remember clearly what happened at this time, I shall summarize her statement about it.

At U Hla Gyaw's home in Magyibin she became ill, apparently rather gravely so, and had a fever with delirium. She noticed a photograph and had a

[3]In Asia, an older person carrying a child usually places it so that the child sits on the older person's hip with its legs around the older person's abdomen and back. The older person then puts an arm around the back of the child to support it. A child is thus carried either on the right or left side of the carrying person.

feeling that it was speaking to her. Then she became aware that the photograph was of herself in the previous life. Other memories came flooding in. At the same time, she noticed a discomfort[4] in her breast where she had the birthmarks. This discomfort continued throughout her illness. She remembered possessions she had had in the previous life. Then she began to talk to Daw Sein Mya (Daw Ngwe Khin's mother) about the previous life and asked her whether she had taken out "those possessions" from where they were kept. The astonished Daw Sein Mya asked her: "What possessions? Who are you?" Ma Mu Mu then said that she was Daw Ngwe Khin.[5] After this, Ma Mu Mu told Daw Ngwe Khin's family how she (in the previous life) had died; and she made some of the other statements and the recognitions that I have already mentioned. Ma Mu Mu's memories were clear at the time of this illness. Her recall was so vivid that she described herself as "reliving" the previous life. As she grew older, her memories became dimmer, but they had not faded completely up to 1971.

Ma Mu Mu's Attitude toward Daw Ngwe Khin's Family. When Ma Mu Mu was ill and having the upsurge of memories about the previous life that I have just described, she also experienced a strong attachment to U Hla Gyaw and Daw Sein Mya. She did not wish to return to her own village, but wanted to stay with them. This was allowed, and U Hla Gyaw and Daw Sein Mya adopted her informally. (They kept her until she went to Rangoon to attend school; informants differed about how long she remained in Magyibin before going to Rangoon.)

I have already mentioned that Ma Mu Mu told Ma Hnin Aye that she (Ma Mu Mu) was her mother. Daw Nge Ma said that when Ma Mu Mu was a young child she would pine for Ma Hnin Aye when she was not with her. She called Ma Hnin Aye by her pet name (Kyar Hla), a style of address that would ordinarily be impolite in Burma when used by a younger person talking to an older one. In general, Ma Mu Mu adopted a "superior, maternal" attitude toward Ma Hnin Aye. She did not, however, insist that Ma Hnin Aye address her as "mother."

Ma Mu Mu also showed her strong identification with Daw Ngwe Khin when she requested that U Hla Gyaw give her a necklace that had belonged to Daw Ngwe Khin. She first asked for the necklace when she was about 13 or 14 years old. U Hla Gyaw refused her request, but Ma Mu Mu persisted in expecting

[4]In translating Ma Mu Mu's description of her condition, U Win Maung first used the English word *pain*; but as the interview continued, this did not seem correct. Ma Mu Mu did not remember an actual physical pain at the site of the birthmarks. The words *irritation* and *numbness* were tried, and finally *discomfort* seemed to give the closest fit to the Burmese expressions Ma Mu Mu was using. It is certain, however, that Ma Mu Mu remembered some unpleasant physical sensation in the area of her birthmarks that she had when, during the mentioned febrile illness of childhood, she recalled many memories of the previous life. She had not had a similar discomfort in that part of her body before or after this occasion.

[5]Given the relationship between the families and the closeness of their villages one would have expected Daw Sein Mya to have learned about Ma Mu Mu's memories (and her birthmarks) if Ma Mu Mu had begun to talk about them before this visit to Magyibin. The discrepancy may be resolved by supposing that Ma Mu Mu was considerably younger than she later thought at the time of this visit to Magyibin. As I mentioned, she clearly thought in 1971 that the visit to Magyibin stimulated her first memories.

him to give her the necklace. U Kyauk Tin mentioned in 1971 that Ma Mu Mu had complained about not being given the necklace just a few weeks before our interview with him. She was then nearly 22 years old.

Ma Mu Mu's Phobia of Firearms. Ma Mu Mu said (in 1971) that she had a fear of firearms. It extended even to toy guns.

She also had a superstitious fear that I have heard occasionally expressed by other subjects of these cases. She thought that *she* might be shot dead. She recognized the fear as groundless, but that did not rid her of it.

Other Behavior of Ma Mu Mu

I mentioned above that Ma Hnin Aye and U Kyauk Tin both described Daw Ngwe Khin as gentle and placid, and they both characterized Ma Mu Mu as *not* being so. Instead, they considered her to be rather aggressive. They attributed this difference to the influence of Ma Mu Mu's parents, although one blamed her father and the other her mother for Ma Mu Mu's failure to show Daw Ngwe Khin's gentleness. On the other hand, Daw Nge Ma, who should have been in a good position to observe Ma Mu Mu's behavior, said that her daughter was gentle, and also pious.

Ma Mu Mu's Birthmarks

Daw Nge Ma said that she noticed Ma Mu Mu's birthmarks soon after her birth. The birthmarks did not ooze or bleed. No one else in the family had similar birthmarks.

Two other informants also testified about observations of Ma Mu Mu's birthmarks soon after her birth. Ma Hnin Aye was about 10 or 11 when Ma Mu Mu was born. She said that the birthmark was noticed at Ma Mu Mu's birth. She remembered that her adoptive grandfather, U Hla Gyaw, had gone to see Ma Mu Mu and had inspected the birthmark. U Kyauk Tin, who was Daw Ngwe Khin's brother, first saw Ma Mu Mu when she was about 6 months old. He had learned from U Aung Ba that Ma Mu Mu had birthmarks that looked like bullet wounds, and he became curious and eager to examine them for himself.

We have no reason to doubt the correspondence in location between the wounds on Daw Ngwe Khin and the birthmarks on Ma Mu Mu. U Kyauk Tin was about 1.5 kilometers from Magyibin when she was shot; but he was sent for soon after the shooting and immediately went over to the village. He recalled that Daw Ngwe Khin had been wounded in the upper chest. After first saying that he thought she had been wounded on the right side, he hesitated and said he was not sure of the side. At a later point in our first interview with him, he said: "The birthmarks were in locations practically similar to those of the wounds [in Daw Ngwe Khin]." Figure 12-1 shows the location of the birthmarks on Ma Mu Mu's left breast.

Figure 12-2 shows clearly two birthmarks, both round, but of different sizes. (Figure 12-3 shows small round wounds made by a shotgun discharged at a closer

Figure 12-1 Photograph of Ma Mu Mu taken in March 1971, when she was about 21½ years old. The arrow indicates the site of the birthmarks on her upper left breast.

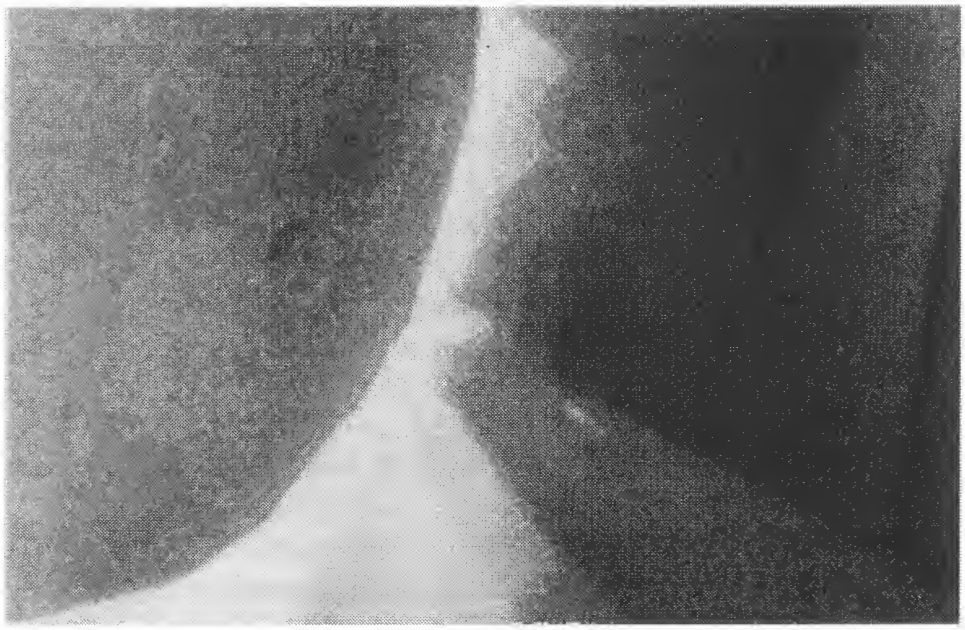


Figure 12-2 Close-up photograph of the birthmarks on Ma Mu Mu taken in February 1972, when she was 22½ years old. The birthmarks were both round. The larger one was about 8 millimeters in diameter, the smaller one about 5 millimeters in diameter. Both were depressed below the surrounding skin and puckered.

Figure 12-3 Wounds caused by pellets from a shotgun on a man killed in Virginia. The gun causing these wounds was fired at a close range. The large central wound was made by a group of pellets entering together. The smaller peripheral wounds, made by individual pellets, are round. (Courtesy of Dr. David Wiecking.)

range than occurred in the present case.) I was told that the difference in the diameters of the nearly adjoining birthmarks corresponded to the two different diameters of the pellets in the shotgun shell that U Maung Maung fired at Daw Ngwe Khin. The weapon was a 12-gauge, double-barreled sporting shotgun of a type (made in England) that had been issued to some Burmese villagers so that they could protect themselves. (The one owned and fired by U Maung Maung must have dated from before the Japanese occupation, because in April 1945 the Japanese were still being beaten back in Upper Burma.) U Kyauk Tin said that the shotshells contained a large shot (type SSG; upper half of Figure 12-4), one of which made the wound that corresponded with Ma Mu Mu's larger birthmark, and also a shot of smaller size. According to him, one of these smaller shots made a wound in Daw Ngwe Khin's breast to which the smaller of Ma Mu Mu's two birthmarks corresponded. The smaller shots were inserted in the center of the shotshell in order to keep the larger shots in position. He said that he had taken a shotshell apart and observed that it contained shots of two sizes.

I tried to confirm this detail of the two sizes of pellets in England, first at the Imperial War Museum in London and then in correspondence with the Royal Small Arms Factory at Enfield Lock and with another manufacturer, Eley (I.M.I.)

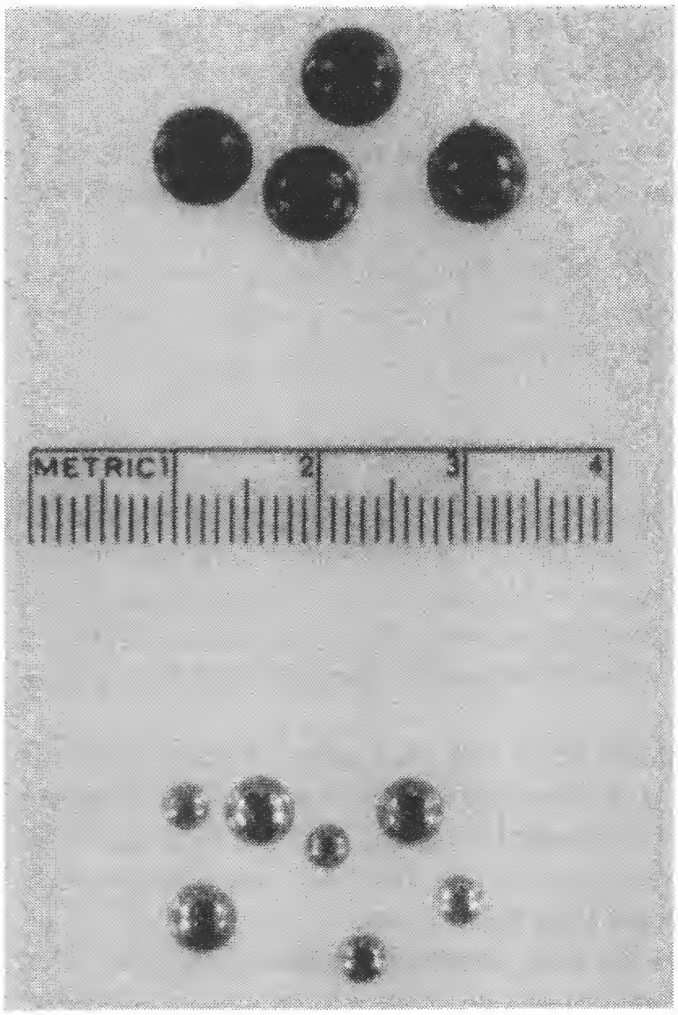


Figure 12-4 The pellets above the measure are from an SSG shotgun cartridge made in England. These pellets measure 6.8 millimeters in diameter. In a standard load 12 pellets would be in each cartridge.
The pellets below the measure are from a Remington SP BBx4 shotshell made in the United States. The load is a mixture of pellets of two different sizes. (SSG pellets courtesy of J. Manton, Eley, I.M.I., Birmingham, England.)

in Birmingham. My correspondents could not remember that any shotshells produced in their factories had contained shots of two different sizes. The possibility arose that the ammunition had been furnished from another factory, perhaps one in India. One of my correspondents (H.J. Woodend of the Royal Small Arms Factory, Enfield Lock) suggested that a shell containing shots of mixed sizes might have derived from a "home load," which occurs when the purchaser of cartridges removes some of the pellets and replaces them with others of a different size. He may do this when he wishes to use the gun for different purposes from those intended by the manufacturer. I then learned that the Burmese owners of these shotguns sometimes did change the shot in the shells.

In 1982 I corresponded with the Remington Arms Company (Bridgeport, Connecticut) and learned that they did not manufacture shotshells with two different sizes of pellet and had never done so. Nevertheless, in the late 1980s they introduced a line of shotshells of just this type (lower half of Figure 12-4). This encourages me to suppose that some other ammunition manufacturer had produced such shells that may have become available in Burma during the period with which we are concerned.

Thus, although I have not been able to confirm independently U Kyauk Tin's statement about the two sizes of shot in the cartridge fired at Daw Ngwe Khin, I think it is accurate.

The glandular tissue of Ma Mu Mu's breast was not implicated in the birthmarks. At any rate, she told me that she noticed no difference between her breasts when she nursed a child.

The site of the wounds on Daw Ngwe Khin and the rapidity of her death (within a few minutes of being wounded) make it certain that the shot punctured her heart or perhaps a large vessel near the heart.

Comment

Ma Mu Mu's statements about the previous life provide little evidence of paranormal processes. Her recognition of Daw Ngwe Khin's photograph and her comment about where it had been taken in Mandalay were certainly unusual; and so was her indication of buried treasure. Apart from these statements, however, it is unlikely that she said anything outside the normal knowledge of her parents, and hence of herself.

Ma Mu Mu had a strong identification with Daw Ngwe Khin. She showed this in her preference, when a child, for Daw Ngwe Khin's parents; in her maternal attitude toward Daw Ngwe Khin's adopted daughter, Ma Hnin Aye; and in her obstinate expectation that U Hla Gyaw would give her Daw Ngwe Khin's necklace. She spoke and acted as if she was Daw Ngwe Khin.

However, the birthmarks are the most important feature of the case. They correspond closely in size, appearance, and location with wounds Daw Ngwe Khin is known to have received.

THE CASE OF OBIKE NWONYE

Summary of the Case and Its Investigation

Obike Nwonye was born in Obeagwu Ozalla, Anambra State, Nigeria, on January 7, 1973. His parents were Nwajiobi Nwonye and his wife, Hope. They were Igbos. Nwajiobi was a schoolteacher, and he and his wife had six other children, all younger than Obike. One of them was Obike's younger twin sister, Ekwutosi.

Immediately after Obike's birth he was found to have a prominent birthmark on the upper right side of his chest. On the basis of this birthmark alone Obike was identified by his grandfather, Nwonye, as the reincarnation of Nwachime Onyia, who was Nwonye's father and thus Obike's great-grandfather. Nwachime had been killed during a quarrel between villagers over land. He had been fatally wounded by shots from a type of shotgun known as a Dane gun (Figure 12-5). An oracle was later consulted about the identification of Obike with Nwachime, but I did not learn what he had said.

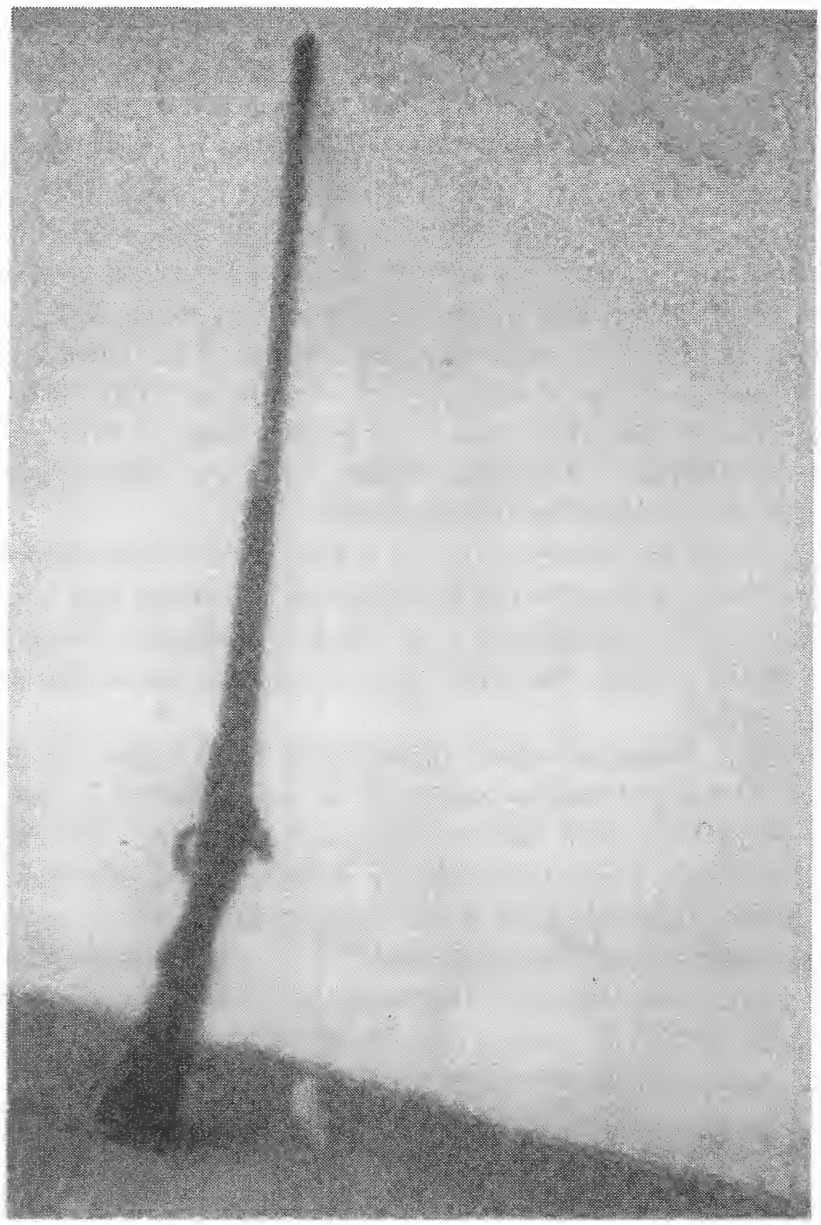


Figure 12-5 Dane gun from Igboland in Nigeria.

I learned of this case in June 1984, when I was in Nigeria (with Dr. Nicholas McClean-Rice) for the investigation of other cases. Nicholas Ibekwe had learned about it from one of his students at the Teachers Training College in Ihe. With Nicholas Ibekwe we went to Obeagwu Ozalla on June 14 and there met Obike and his parents, who were our sole informants. For this case I have not obtained any subsequent information.

The Life and Death of Nwachime Onyia

Nwajiobi Nwonye was our sole source of information about his grandfather, Nwachime Onyia. He had obtained his information from his father, Nwonye

(donor of his name to subsequent members of the family), who was Nwachime's son. The chronology that follows is probably accurate only to within 3 to 5 years of the dates I shall give.

Nwachime was born in about 1882. In adulthood he married and had at least one son, Nwonye, whose birth year I estimate to have been about 1927. When Nwonye was about 10 years old, Nwachime became involved in a dispute over land, a skirmish ensued, and he was fatally wounded by shots from a Dane gun. He would have died, according to these calculations, in about 1937.

When I asked how it was known that Nwachime had been killed by shots from a Dane gun, I was told that Dane guns were the only type of firearms available in Nigeria at the time. The name *Dane gun* is current in Nigeria for a type of long-barreled muzzle-loaded shotgun (Figure 12-5), the prototype of which was originally brought to Nigeria by Danish traders.

Nwonye grew up, married, and had children, including Nwajiobi, who was his only son. Nwonye himself died in about 1982. Nwonye had seen Nwachime after he was wounded, and he lived to see Obike's birthmark, which he examined right after Obike's birth. He told Nwajiobi that it was at the same site as Nwachime's wound.

Comment. Someone—but I cannot tell from my notes whether this was Nwajiobi or Nicholas Ibekwe—said that no one involved in the fight when Nwachime was killed could have actually seen the Dane gun of Nwachime's assailant. This was the context of my being assured that the gun *must* have been a Dane gun, because no other kind of gun was available. However, if I may here reason backward from the birthmark (Figure 12-6) to the presumed corresponding wound, the shotgun must have been discharged at a close range, by which I mean within 2 meters, and probably less. At a longer range the pellets would have dispersed much more widely, and there would have been multiple smaller wounds (and possibly more than one birthmark), instead of one large wound and one large birthmark. Figure 12-7 shows the wounds made by a shotgun discharged at 3 yards (about 2.3 meters); already the pellets had begun to disperse, and they made a few smaller wounds around the large central one. Figure 12-3 shows wounds from an even greater dispersal of shotgun pellets. (I discussed the dispersal of shotgun pellets in connection with the case of Hanumant Saxena; whereas for that case I had the advantage of a postmortem report on the body of Maha Ram, whose life Hanumant recalled, for Obike's case I have no such document.) If I am correct in this reasoning, I think that other villagers participating in the fight on Nwachime's side would have been close enough to the man with the Dane gun to have seen it, and they could later have reported their observation.

Other Information

Obike never expressed any imaged memories of a previous life. He said that he wanted to buy a gun, and his favorite toy was a toy gun. He had not, however, expressed any desire for revenge against Nwachime's assailant.

Figure 12-6 Birthmark on upper right chest of Obike Nwonye as it appeared in June 1984, when he was 11½ years old. The birthmark was a roughly triangular depressed area, about 2 centimeters by 2 centimeters. Inside the affected area there were multiple partly separated round depressions each about 4-5 millimeters in diameter.

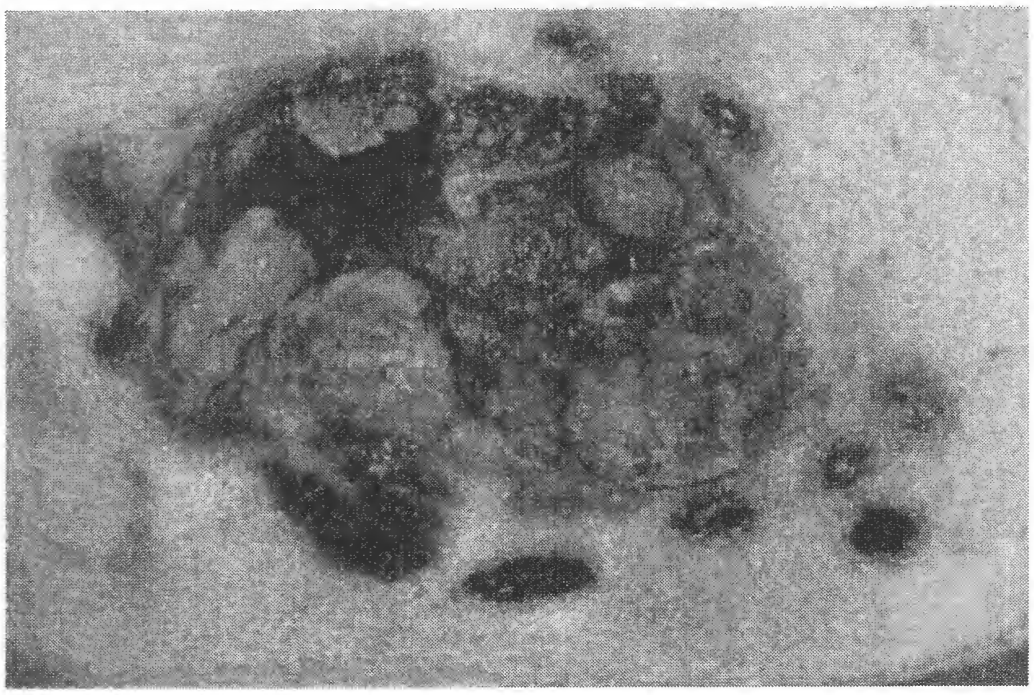


Figure 12-7 Shotgun wounds of entry in a person murdered in England. The gun was discharged into the chest at a range of 3 yards (about 2.3 meters). The pellets had begun to disperse before striking the skin so that a few wounds from individual pellets can be seen around the large central wound. (Courtesy of Professor G.A. Gresham.)

Obike's Birthmark

Obike's birthmark (Figure 12-6) was a slightly depressed, irregular area, roughly triangular in shape and about 2 centimeters by 2 centimeters. Its most unusual feature—and the reason for my including it in this chapter on details—was a group of smaller round depressed areas within the birthmark. These round depressions were about 4-5 millimeters in diameter. They suggested the small round or roundish wounds that individual shotgun pellets make. Figure 12-7 shows such small roundish wounds in the body of a person murdered in England. (As I mentioned, the wounds from individual pellets can be seen around the large central wound.) The birthmark on Ma Mu Mu (Figure 12-2), which we know corresponded to a shotgun wound, also showed two distinctly round depressions.

Nwajiobi said that Obike's birthmark at his birth had been comparatively larger in relation to surrounding tissues than it subsequently became.

Obike's birthmark was not bleeding or discharging when he was born. Obike had never complained of pain at the site of the birthmark.

No other member of the family had a birthmark like Obike's.

Comment

If my calculations are correct, the interval between Nwachime's death and Obike's birth was 36 years. Even if I am wrong by 5 years—which I may well be—the interval is one of the longest of any case known to me.

THE CASE OF CORLISS CHOTKIN, JR.

Introduction

Corliss Chotkin, Jr. was born in Sitka, Alaska, on December 15, 1947. (His father was Caucasian, his mother half-Tlingit, half-Caucasian.) I have elsewhere published a detailed account of his case, which I investigated between 1962 and 1965. In my account of the case I described several statements and recognitions Corliss made suggesting that he had memories of the life of his maternal great-uncle Victor Vincent, who had died in the spring of 1946, about 18 months before Corliss's birth. I also described some behavior Corliss showed that was unusual in his family, but appropriate for the skills, habits (such as stuttering), and other aspects of Victor Vincent's personality. I will not repeat here all the details of these features of the case and instead will only describe and discuss Corliss's two birthmarks.

Victor Vincent's Prediction of Reincarnating with Two Birthmarks

In 1945 Victor Vincent (a full-blooded Tlingit) was 69 years old. He had not been in good health and probably did not expect to live much longer. (He died the

following year.) On a visit to his niece Irene Chotkin, he told her that he hoped to reincarnate as her son. He said he would prefer to have her as a mother instead of other women of the family, some of whom were negligent parents or alcoholics. Victor Vincent also wished to return as Irene Chotkin's son because he believed that a sister, Gertrude, of whom he was fond (this was Corliss's maternal grandmother) had already reincarnated as Irene's daughter, and he liked the thought of being with this sister. He also expressed a wish not to stutter in his next life, as he had in the one he was expecting would soon terminate.

As Victor Vincent predicted his return as his niece's son, he showed her two scars from operations he had had, on his nose and on his back. Irene Chotkin later told me that she remembered how her uncle "pulled his shirt up and showed the scar of an operation on his back."

Corliss's Birthmarks

Corliss's mother and father agreed that they had noticed two birthmarks at the time of his birth. However, I obtained most of my information about the details of the changing appearances and locations of the birthmarks from Corliss's mother. Corliss was 15 years old when I first met him and examined his birthmarks.

The first birthmark was at the base of the right side of the nose near the inner angle of the right eye. Corliss's father said that it had been "deep red" at the time of Corliss's birth. This birthmark had migrated as Corliss grew, and by the time I first met him in 1962 it was on the external aspect of the right nares. It was slightly depressed, slightly puckered, and somewhat more pigmented than the surrounding skin. It can be seen fairly clearly in Figure 12-8.

When I last met Corliss in 1972, this birthmark had faded and was barely visible.

The second birthmark was on the upper part of Corliss's right back. It also was reddish when Corliss was born, and his father said that it looked like "a small scar." In 1962 it was located on the right side of the upper back, about 12 centimeters below the top of the right shoulder and about 5 centimeters lateral to the midline. Figure 12-9 shows its location, but little detail. It was about 2 centimeters long, 5 millimeters wide, and deeply pigmented. It was slightly elevated above the surrounding skin. Along the margins of the main birthmark I could discern six small dots of hyperpigmentation. Four of these were aligned on the medial side and closely resembled the small scars of surgical stitch wounds. There were two somewhat similar pigmented points on the lateral side of the main birthmark. Figure 12-10 shows the scar of a small surgical incision made for a biopsy of an inclusion cyst. Small scars made by the stitching of the incision can be seen beside the main scar in the figure.

In 1962 I was just beginning to pay attention to birthmarks in these cases, and I had little competence in photography. I did not even have a closeup lens for the camera I then had. However, I did attempt a sketch of the birthmarks on Corliss's back—the main one and the little pigmented dots adjoining it—and reproduce this in Figure 12-11.

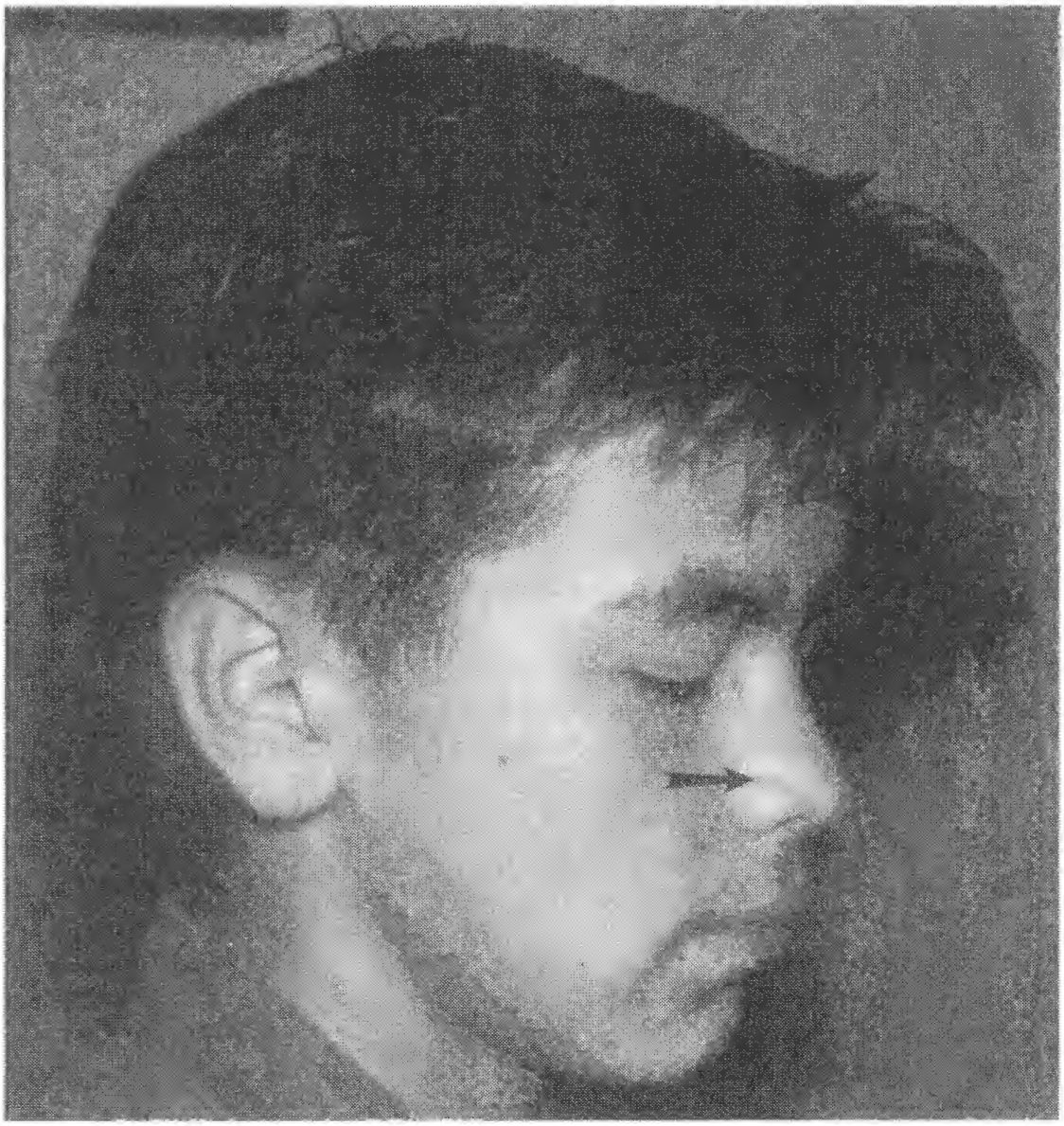


Figure 12-8 Birthmark on the right side of Corliss Chotkin, Jr.'s nose as it appeared in May 1963, when he was 15½ years old. The birthmark was on the skin of the right nostril. It was a slightly depressed, puckered, area of hyperpigmentation.

As mentioned, this birthmark had been reddish, but not pigmented when Corliss was born. His mother said that the marks corresponding to stitch marks had been more prominent at Corliss's birth. Also, the whole birthmark had been relatively higher on his back; as he grew, it moved inferiorly.

When Corliss was an infant and young child, the birthmark itched and he scratched it. This led to its becoming infected, and apparently the scratching or the infection, or both, stimulated a further pigmentation of the area.

As this birthmark continued to itch and as Corliss continued to scratch it, he was advised to have it removed surgically, and this was done in 1969. When I last

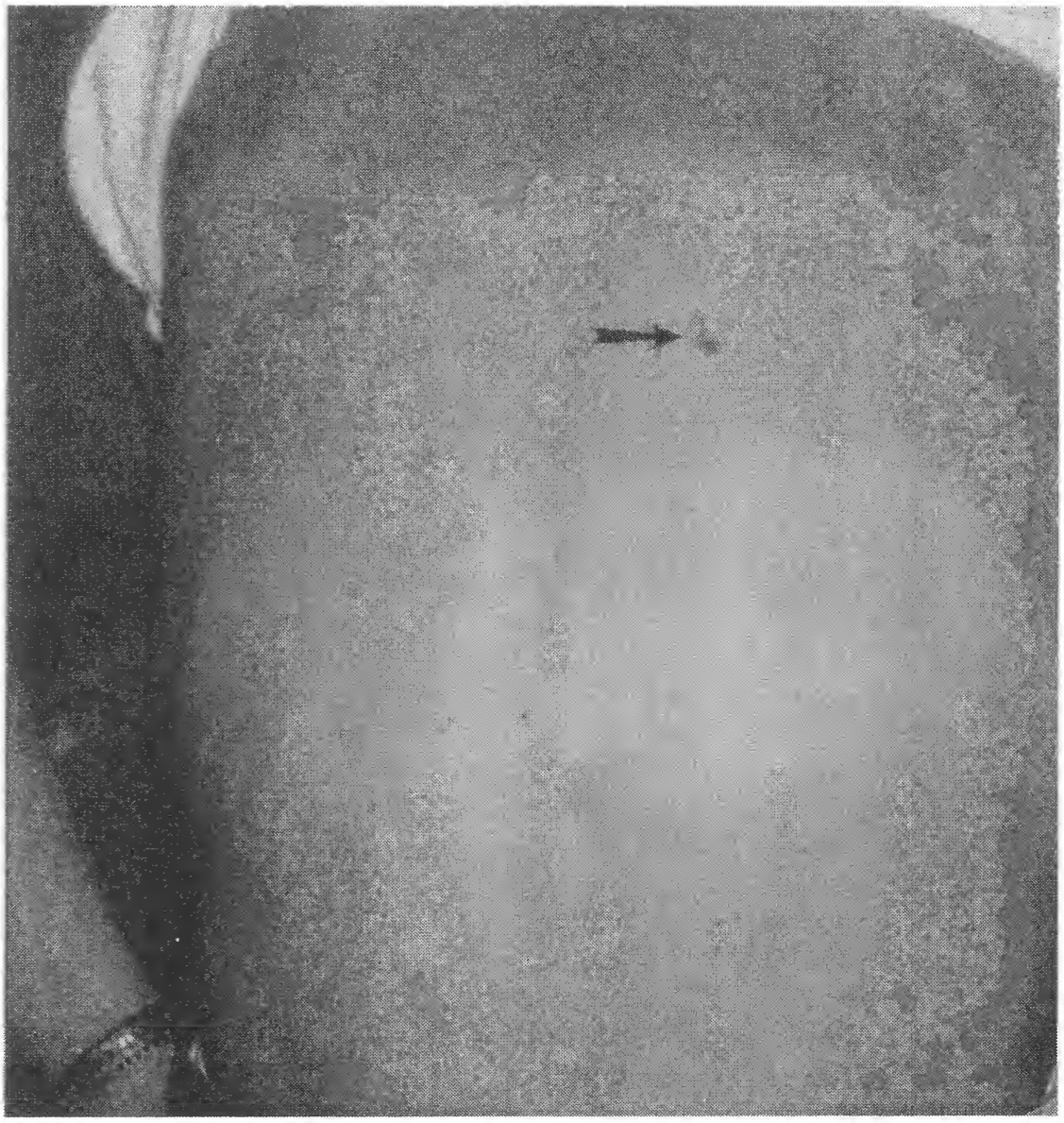


Figure 12-9 Birthmark on the upper right back of Corliss Chotkin, Jr. as it appeared in May 1963, when he was 15½ years old. The birthmark was then an irregularly shaped area of hyperpigmentation, about 2 centimeters long and 5 millimeters wide. It was slightly elevated above the surrounding skin. The photograph shows little detail.

met him in 1972, I could see nothing of the birthmark on his back, only the scar of the operation for its removal.

Verification of the Scars on Victor Vincent

I made many efforts to corroborate the statements Corliss's mother had made about the scars on her uncle's nose and back. I succeeded with regard to the scar on the nose, but not with that on the back.

Figure 12-10 Scar of a small surgical incision for a biopsy of an inclusion cyst. Small scars made by stitches closing the incision can be seen at the sides of the main scar. (Courtesy of Dr. Kenneth Greer.)

One of Victor Vincent's friends, the Rev. William Potts, remembered that he had had an operation for an infection in his eye or nose (he was unsure which) and that he had afterward had a scar at the base of his right nose, near the corner of the eye.

I obtained a summary of an admission Victor Vincent had had in 1938 at the United States Public Health Service Hospital in Seattle, Washington. The record sent to me stated that "For several years patient has had suppurating lacrimating right eye and is referred here for evaluation and treatment." The diagnosis was "Dacryocystitis, right," and the operation performed was described as "Removal of tear duct sac, right."

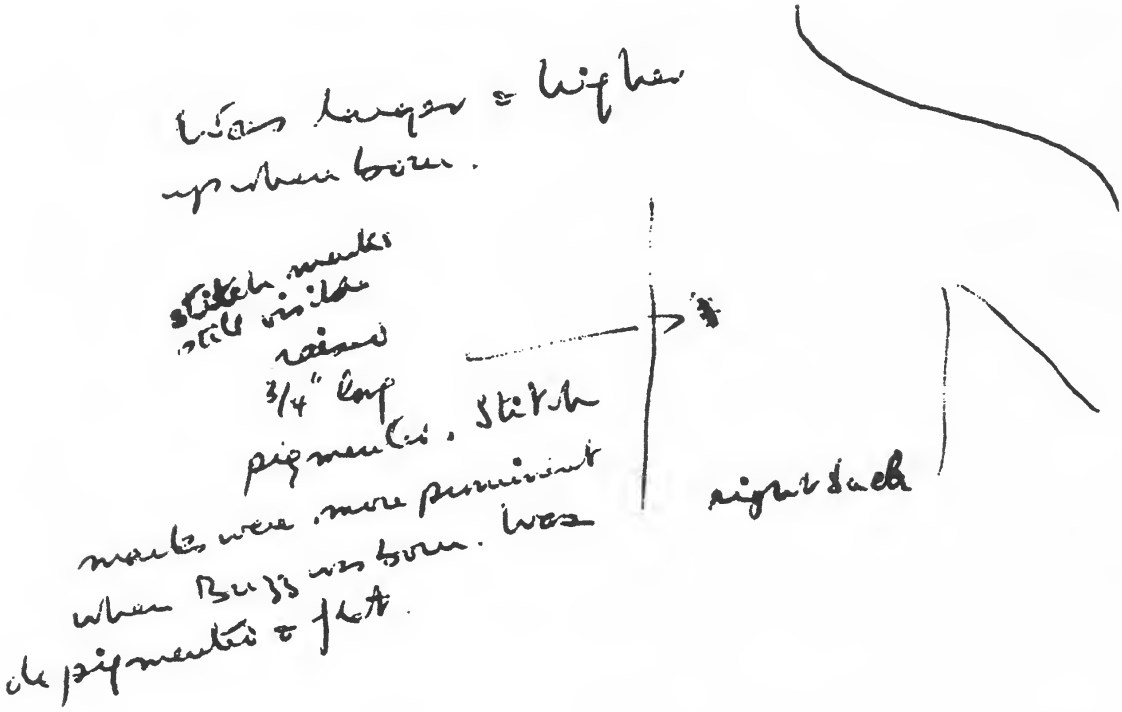


Figure 12-11 Sketch of birthmark on the upper right back of Corliss Chotkin, Jr. made in September 1962. The sketch shows the six punctate areas of hyperpigmentation beside the main birthmark. These appeared to correspond to the small scars made by surgical stitches. (Corliss Chotkin, Jr.'s nickname was Buzz, and I wrote his name in the notes of the sketch.)

Although I wrote to several hospitals where Victor Vincent had been, or was thought perhaps to have been, a patient, I could not obtain from any of them confirmation that he had had an operation on his back. I did, however, obtain evidence that an operation might have been performed between 1940 and 1945 (when Victor Vincent showed a scar on his back to his niece.) Irene Chotkin thought that Victor Vincent had had an operation on his back "a couple of years before he died," and she thought that this had been for pleurisy. I obtained a summary of another admission in 1940 of Victor Vincent to the United States Public Health Service Hospital in Seattle. At this admission he was found to have "Tuberculosis, pulmonary, chronic, moderately advanced (right apex)." There was also a suspicion of an abdominal malignancy, and he had a palpable mass in the upper left abdomen; but in the end he was judged not to have cancer. The radiological examination of his chest showed "an infiltrating lesion in the right upper quadrant." The birthmark on Corliss's back was over this part of the lung. The record showed that Victor Vincent left the hospital "at his own request" and returned to his home in Alaska. The United States Public Health Service Hospital had no records of later admissions there. It seems to me probable, however, that at some hospital in Alaska Victor Vincent had an operation related to the identified lesion in his right upper chest. If it was judged to be an abscess, an attempt might have been made to drain it. If it was thought to be a possible malignant growth

(perhaps related to the suspected, but previously unconfirmed malignancy in his abdomen), a biopsy might have been undertaken. I applied for information to a private hospital in Juneau, where such an operation might have taken place, but it had no record of any; however, this hospital had merged with another one, and some of its records appear to have been lost.

No other informant for the case could recall seeing a scar on Victor Vincent's back. However, this is not surprising, since the scar would ordinarily have been hidden by his clothes, and he had to pull up his shirt to show it to Irene Chotkin.

Other Cases with Birthmarks Corresponding to Surgical Stitch Wounds

In my report of the case of Juggi Lal Agarwal I drew attention to small punctate elevations along the line of the birthmark behind his right ear. I suggested that these might correspond with surgical stitch marks on Puttu Lal, the man whose life Juggi Lal remembered. In this case, however, we obtained no confirmation that Puttu Lal's inflammation had been lanced, let alone that an incision made had been sewn up.

U Win Maung obtained some preliminary information about a baby born in Rangoon who was said to have a birthmark corresponding to the wound or scar of a surgical incision complete with birthmarks matching the stitch wounds. He was, however, unable to trace the baby, so that the case remains uninvestigated.

Harvey (1888) reported a case of maternal impression in which a baby boy, whose pregnant mother watched her older son being circumcised, was born circumcised and with "even the scars from the sutures reproduced in the exact number and location" of those on the older son. (This is Case 30 of Table 3-2.)

THE CASE OF MA WIN WIN NYUNT

Introduction

The subject of this case probably had no imaged memories of a previous life. Her parents nevertheless identified her as being the successive reincarnation of her father's mother and her own deceased older brother. They came to this conclusion on the basis of dreams, certain behavioral resemblances, and some unusual birthmarks. I mentioned this case briefly in Chapter 10 as an example of an experimental birthmark.

Summary of the Case and Its Investigation

Ma Win Win Nyunt was born in Rangoon on March 27, 1957. Her parents were U Khin Nyunt and his wife, Daw Mu Mu. She was their only child at the time of her birth, but they had earlier had a son, Maung Maung Ley, who had died

of leukemia on November 4, 1953. U Khin Nyunt was an administrative officer of the Burmese Government.

At her birth Ma Win Win Nyunt was found to have three birthmarks that led her parents to think that she was the reincarnation of Maung Maung Ley. He, during his lifetime, had been identified as the reincarnation of U Khin Nyunt's mother, Daw U Shwe.

Although Ma Win Win Nyunt made few statements indicating imaged memories of the lives of her older brother or grandmother, she resembled her grandmother in some of her behavior.

The case came to the attention of Francis Story in 1961, and he began its investigation in December of that year. His informants (and mine later) were Ma Win Win Nyunt's parents. When Francis Story met Ma Win Win Nyunt, she was 4½ years old. Francis Story (1975) published a report of the case, which contains some details that I am omitting from this report.

About a decade later, between December 1970 and November 1972, I met U Khin Nyunt and Daw Mu Mu on four separate occasions, all at their home in Rangoon. Ma Win Win Nyunt was present at two of the first three of these meetings, but she later went to live with a relative in Manila, where it was thought she could obtain a better education than that available in Rangoon.

U Khin Nyunt, Daw Mu Mu and Ma Win Win Nyunt all spoke English well, so that although U Win Maung was with me during my meetings with them, he did not need to interpret.

As will be seen, a family servant contributed to this case and might have made a useful informant. However, he had left the family's employment before 1970, and U Khin Nyunt did not know how to find him.

The Life and Death of Daw U Shwe

Daw U Shwe was born in about 1871. When she grew up, she married and had several children. Of these her favorite son was her youngest, U Khin Nyunt, who was born in 1914. U Khin Nyunt's father died when he was only 4 years old, and this may have contributed to his unusually strong attachment to his mother.

When U Khin Nyunt grew up, he entered government service, and by 1948 he had risen to the rank of a subdivisional officer in the district of Pyinmana in Upper Burma. In 1943 he married Daw Mu Mu. For the first 6 years of their marriage they had no children.

In October 1948, U Khin Nyunt came to Rangoon on a brief leave, and, as it happened, he saw his mother then for the last time. It was a period of political chaos in Burma (see Appendix B), and in February 1949 Pyinmana was overrun by Karen insurgents who took U Khin Nyunt prisoner. They removed him to Thandaung in the Toungoo District, where he remained a prisoner for 32 months until he was able to escape in late 1951.

U Khin Nyunt told me that the Karens would probably have killed him but for his record of dealing justly with them as an administrative officer; enough of

them remembered his fairness to them so that they spared his life. His wife became a prisoner with him. They were completely unable to communicate with Rangoon, so that his mother did not know where he was or what had happened to him; and he knew little about how his mother was. He worried much about her, and she, he later learned, was greatly distressed about his disappearance. During this period he had several dreams about his mother. Also, at this time Daw Mu Mu became pregnant, and on June 8, 1950, she gave birth (in Thandaung) to a boy, Maung Maung Ley.

When U Khin Nyunt was finally able to get back to Rangoon, he learned that his mother had died there on August 24, 1949. She had been ill for only a week or 10 days before dying. She had been asking for U Khin Nyunt and crying; and he believed that she had died of grief for him.

The Life and Death of Maung Maung Ley

When Maung Maung Ley was about 3 years old, he became seriously ill. At first he was thought to have anemia, but a further examination showed that he was suffering from leukemia. He was treated with blood transfusions and received 16 altogether. These probably prolonged his life, but did not save it, and he died in Rangoon on November 4, 1953.

Maung Maung Ley seems to have had no imaged memories of the life of his grandmother. However, he was observed to ask that he be called "Ma Ma," a sort of nickname by which servants had sometimes called Daw U Shwe.

Maung Maung Ley's parents thought that he was somewhat girlish, but he had never asked to be dressed in girls' clothes.

As his illness progressed, Maung Maung Ley was aware that he was dying, and he repeatedly asked his family whether they could not save him. About half an hour before he died he looked up and said: "I shall be coming [back]."

Maung Maung Ley was receiving a transfusion through a needle in a vein at his left ankle when he died, and the piece of adhesive tape used to hold the needle in place was left attached when his body was buried. (Although U Khin Nyunt remembered in 1961 that the adhesive tape and birthmark had both been on the left ankles, in 1970 he had forgotten the side and thought they were on the *right* ankles. In 1971, he again said that adhesive tape and birthmark were on the left ankles.)

Before the boy's body was buried, a family servant, unknown to Maung Maung Ley's parents, had placed a mark with charcoal on his lower back near or on one buttock and a linear streak of charcoal on the side of one leg. (As a servant he had access to the boy's dead body before its burial.) This same servant, who was the family's driver, had the habit, whenever the family drove past the cemetery where Maung Maung Ley was buried, of calling out: "Maung Maung Ley, come back, come back!"

When Ma Win Win Nyunt was born, her parents noticed a large dark patch on one of her buttocks, but it meant nothing to them. When they showed the baby to the family servant, he immediately turned the baby over, pointed to the birth-

mark, and said: "This is the mark I made with charcoal on Maung Maung Ley after he died. Now I know it [meaning Ma Win Win Nyunt] is he."

Ma Win Win Nyunt's parents also noticed a birthmark, which I shall describe later, on her left ankle at the place where adhesive tape had been applied to Maung Maung Ley's left ankle as he received his last blood transfusion.

Ma Win Win Nyunt also had, at birth, a bluish-black streak on the inner aspect of her right leg. U Khin Nyunt said that the driver had drawn a line with charcoal at this place on Maung Maung Ley's dead body. Because Daw Mu Mu could not remember definitely that the driver had made charcoal streaks on Maung Maung Ley's leg, I shall say nothing further about this additional birthmark.

The Dreams of U Khin Nyunt and Daw Mu Mu

As I mentioned, U Khin Nyunt and Daw Mu Mu had several dreams in which his mother, Daw U Shwe, figured. I shall describe only the more important of these. For some of them a diary that U Khin Nyunt had kept provided a close dating; for others he and his wife had to rely on their memories.

The first relevant dreams occurred after the Karen insurgents had captured U Khin Nyunt and Daw Mu Mu. Daw U Shwe had no news of her son and he little about her. However, his diary noted that on August 18, 1949, he had received a letter—he did not note from whom—with information that his mother was ill. Apparently the correspondent gave no details of Daw U Shwe's illness, and U Khin Nyunt does not appear to have been alarmed by the letter. However, at about this time he had two dreams in which his mother seemed to be wanting to see and talk with him. In one of the dreams his mother appeared to be ill.

Daw U Shwe died, after a brief illness, on August 24, 1949, but U Khin Nyunt did not learn about this until he returned to Rangoon in 1951. On September 1, 1949, he received a short letter from his father-in-law, who said that everyone was well. (It is not clear that his father-in-law was keeping the news of Daw U Shwe's death from U Khin Nyunt; given the difficulties of communication at that time in Burma, he might have written the letter early in August before Daw U Shwe had become ill.) In September Daw Mu Mu became pregnant. On October 14, U Khin Nyunt had a vivid dream in which his mother was laid out as a corpse dressed in burial clothes that he had never seen before but of which he took particular note. Although in one sense Daw U Shwe was dead—that is, a corpse—in the dream, she also was alive, and she embraced her son. He then gave her some brandy and water and she revived. U Khin Nyunt interpreted this dream to mean that his mother—of whose death he knew nothing normally—might return as his child. Later, back in Rangoon, U Khin Nyunt learned from relatives that they had buried his mother dressed in the unusual clothes in which he had seen her in the dream. He had never seen this particular dress normally. A relative had brought it from the United States. (In recounting this dream to Francis Story, U Khin Nyunt dated it to the time of his mother's death; however, his diary, which he consulted during my interview with him in February 1971, showed that he had

had the dream almost 2 months after his mother's death and when Daw Mu Mu was about 6 weeks pregnant with Maung Maung Ley.)

At about the same time (October 1949) Daw Mu Mu also dreamed of Daw U Shwe, who told her, explicitly, that she was coming to live with them.

In August 1950 U Khin Nyunt dreamed that Maung Maung Ley—who was then an infant of only 2 months—somehow communicated to him that he was his mother reborn. He gave me two accounts of this dream. In one he described it as if Maung Maung Ley had spoken to him, in the other as if his mother had done so.

After Maung Maung Ley became ill in the spring of 1953, U Khin Nyunt dreamed of his mother again. She seemed to be in the bedroom with him and his wife, but instead of speaking to them she turned around and left the room. He was astonished at this and commented to his wife: "Look at my mother! She did not even speak to me!"

About 3 years after Maung Maung Ley's death, when Daw Mu Mu again became pregnant, she dreamed that her dead son was coming back. (A family servant had a similar dream at about the same time, although she did not know that Daw Mu Mu was pregnant again.)

Statements Made by Ma Win Win Nyunt

U Khin Nyunt and Daw Mu Mu thought that Ma Win Win Nyunt had made a few statements suggestive of imaged memories of a previous life. However, when we asked for specific examples of what she had said, they were able to give little further information.

When she was about 2 years old, Ma Win Win Nyunt (like Maung Maung Ley before her) asked the servants to call her "Ma Ma," which was the sort of familiar name by which the servants had addressed Daw U Shwe. She also asked relatives of the family to call her "Ma Ma." She addressed her father as "son."

During Francis Story's meeting with the family, Ma Win Win Nyunt was present. When she overheard the name of her grandmother mentioned, she turned to her mother, smiled, hid her face, and said: "That's me. I am Daw U Shwe."

Ma Win Win Nyunt said nothing about the life of Maung Maung Ley.

Ma Win Win Nyunt's Behavior Related to the Previous Life

U Khin Nyunt and Daw Mu Mu described several features in which they thought that Ma Win Win Nyunt resembled her grandmother. Perhaps the most prominent of these was her concern for her father. She was especially solicitous of him if he became in any way ill. Whenever he was ill, she would nurse him; and when she thought that he might have a fever, she put her cheek to his to feel whether he did have one. Daw U Shwe had done exactly the same when U Khin Nyunt had been ill during her lifetime.

Ma Win Win Nyunt showed a definite "adult attitude." For example, she wanted, at the age of 12, to participate in the direction of the household. She

sometimes scolded her father, but did not like it if he scolded her. Both Daw U Shwe and Ma Win Win Nyunt were unusually concerned about cleanliness, especially with regard to food. Both were also more than ordinarily religious.

One of U Khin Nyunt's older brothers had married a woman of whom his mother disapproved and without her consent. The son and his wife had then squandered money in a manner that justified Daw U Shwe's disapproval of their marriage. When this profligate couple—Ma Win Win Nyunt's uncle and aunt—came to visit her family, she refused to meet them, saying that she could not stand the sight of them.

Other Observations of Ma Win Win Nyunt's Behavior

Because Ma Win Win Nyunt's parents thought that she was the reincarnation of Maung Maung Ley (as also of Daw U Shwe), I made some inquiries about her gender identity. Ma Win Win Nyunt was then nearly 14 years old. She had some tomboy tendencies, but they were not extreme. On the Extended Draw-a-Person Test (Whitaker, 1961), she drew two feminine-looking girls as free choices. I learned about and detected nothing in her behavior that suggested a masculine gender identity.

Ma Win Win Nyunt's Birthmarks

I was not invited to examine the birthmark on Ma Win Win Nyunt's buttock, and I did not ask to do so. However, I have no reason to doubt its existence, the accuracy of the description of it given me, or its correspondence with the charcoal mark that the servant had placed on Maung Maung Ley's body after he died. This birthmark has a feature lacking in many of the cases with experimental birthmarks in that Daw Mu Mu was completely unaware that the servant had marked Maung Maung Ley's body until after Ma Win Win Nyunt's birth. Thus we can exclude maternal impression as an interpretation for this birthmark.

Ma Win Win Nyunt's other birthmark was that on the outer aspect of her left ankle. Francis Story described this to me in a letter of November 7, 1963, as "the rectangular shape of adhesive tape, scaled down in size to the child's diminished proportions. Pigmentation lighter than surrounding area. The parents stated that it looked exactly as though adhesive tape had just been removed."

When I met Ma Win Win Nyunt—10 years after Francis Story's examination—I expected that this birthmark would have faded, and indeed I was told that this had happened. Moreover, at my first meeting with Ma Win Win Nyunt she misremembered the leg on which the birthmark was as being her right leg; and when I examined her right ankle, I found no trace of a birthmark. Later, in March 1971, she said that the birthmark was on her left leg, and when I examined her left ankle, I found the birthmark faint, but still distinctly visible. Daw Mu Mu said this birthmark was at the exact site where adhesive tape had been applied when Maung Maung Ley had received his last (intravenous) injection. (She did not use

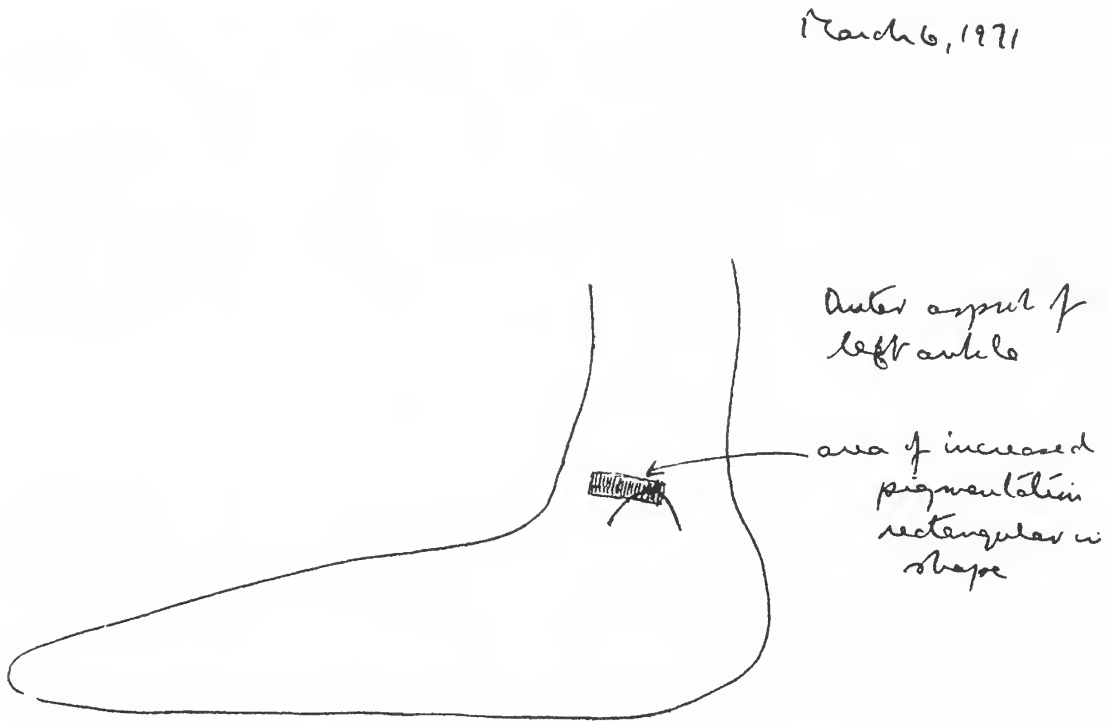


Figure 12-12 Sketch of birthmark on left ankle of Ma Win Win Nyunt made in 1971, when she was 14 years old. At this time the birthmark was a distinctly rectangular area of hyperpigmentation.

the word *transfusion* at this time.) Figure 12-12 reproduces a sketch that I made of the birthmark in March 1971. To me it seemed that the area of the birthmark had slightly *increased* pigmentation compared with the surrounding skin, whereas Francis Story, examining the birthmark 10 years earlier, had noted that it had *lessened* pigmentation. I might have been deceived by the lighting when I examined the admittedly extremely faint birthmark; or it may have changed in appearance during the 10 years between our observations.

Comment

This is one of the rare cases in which a subject was said to be the reincarnation of two previous personalities. However, I should emphasize that Ma Win Win Nyunt had no imaged memories of Maung Maung Ley's life and few, if any, of Daw U Shwe's. The evidence for interpreting the case as one of reincarnation derives from dreams, birthmarks, and some resemblances of behavior. The case thus to some extent resembles that of Huriye Bugay.

The only other case that I have studied in which the subject had a birthmark corresponding to a surgical bandage is that of Jacinta Agbo, which I described in Chapter 7.

THE CASE OF MEHMET KARAYTU

Summary of the Case and Its Investigation

Mehmet Karaytu was born in 1931 in the village of Kavaklı, which is about 10 kilometers from the city of Adana, Turkey. His parents were Diyap Karaytu and his wife, Kâmile. Mehmet had four sisters and three brothers, but I did not learn his birth order among them. I also did not learn his father's occupation. The family were Arabic-speaking Alevis.

When Mehmet Karaytu was born, he had a prominent birthmark on his lower back (Figure 12-13), and I shall describe it later.

I do not know how old Mehmet Karaytu was when he first began to speak coherently. When he was between 3 and 4 years old, he began referring to a previous life. He gave a detailed account of how he had quarreled with a brother-in-law who stabbed him in the back. He mentioned several names, and these, together with details he stated about the circumstances of the quarrel and stabbing, enabled his parents to identify the person to whom Mehmet was referring as a man called Haydar Karadöl, who had died in the circumstances Mehmet described in (probably) 1931.

At about the time Mehmet began talking about the previous life he asked insistently to be taken to Karayusuflu (another village of the area), where he said he had lived. Eventually, but not before he was about 7 years old, his grandmother took him to Karayusuflu, and he there recognized some members of Haydar Karadöl's family.

I first learned about this case in 1967 when I was in Adana (with Reşat Bayer) studying other cases. At that time, Mehmet Karaytu was 36 years old, and the main events of his case had occurred 30 or more years earlier. Unlike most subjects, Mehmet Karaytu claimed that he could still remember details of the previous life, and on November 1, 1967, Reşat Bayer and I tape-recorded a long statement by him. Subsequently, we interviewed his parents and then some members of Haydar Karadöl's family. In 1971 we had another interview with Mehmet Karaytu and also (for the first time) an interview with his paternal uncle Latif, who proved a useful informant. Although my information has numerous gaps, I believe it sufficient to warrant including the case in this work. Its most noteworthy detail is the distinctly triangular shape of Mehmet's birthmark.

Persons Interviewed during the Investigation

In Kavaklı I interviewed:

Diyap Karaytu, Mehmet Karaytu's father
Kâmile Karaytu, Mehmet Karaytu's mother

In Adana I interviewed:

Mehmet Karaytu
Latif Karaytu, Mehmet Karaytu's paternal uncle

In Karayusuflu I interviewed:

Fatme Sabuncu, Haydar Karadöl's daughter
Güllü Tahir, one of Haydar Karadöl's wives, who later married again
Fethi Sabuncu, Fatme Sabuncu's brother-in-law
Zeynep Karadöl, Haydar Karadöl's older sister

Haydar Karadöl's parents, Ali and Zemzem, had died before 1967, and so had Mehmet's grandmother, who had been the first person to take him to Karayusuflu.

Three of the informants in Karayusuflu spoke no Turkish, and we needed a bilingual Arabic-speaking interpreter in talking with them. For two of these informants a third informant (Fethi Sabuncu) acted as our interpreter, a situation that I try to avoid. For the third Arabic-speaking informant we had an interpreter who was not himself a witness of anything connected with the case.

Relevant Facts of Geography and Possibilities for Normal Means of Communication between the Two Families

Adana is the largest city of south central Turkey and the capital of the province of Adana. Kavaklı and Karayusuflu are about 10-12 kilometers from Adana and about 4 kilometers from each other. Yalmanlı, where Haydar Karadöl was fatally stabbed, is another nearby village, but I did not learn its exact distance from the others.

Both Mehmet's father and paternal uncle said that they had not known or even known about Haydar Karadöl or his family before Mehmet began to speak about a previous life. They then made inquiries that verified his statements.

Because Kavaklı and Karayusuflu are so close to each other, I find it surprising that Mehmet's family had not at least heard of Haydar's death. However, there would not be much if any traffic between such villages; inhabitants of each would go into Adana for their more important shopping without necessarily traversing the other village. Mehmet's parents said that his mother had never been to Karayusuflu, and his father had gone there altogether only about six times. Moreover, murders were common in that region of Turkey in the 1930s, and its inhabitants probably gave little attention to any occurring outside their immediate village.

The Life and Death of Haydar Karadöl

Haydar Karadöl's parents having died before 1967, the principal firsthand informants for his life and death were Haydar's wife, Güllü Tahir (she married again after her first husband's death), and his older sister, Zeynep Karadöl. Haydar's daughter, Fatme Sabuncu, was only about 3 years old when her father died and not a firsthand witness for information about her father.

Haydar Karadöl was a cultivator who lived at Karayusuflu. He had two wives, Güllü and Meyase. Güllü had a daughter, Fatme. I conjecture that Haydar

may have taken a second wife because he thought that Güllü would not provide a son for him. Polygamy was legally abolished in Turkey in 1926, but continued to be practiced for many years thereafter (see Appendix A). We were given to understand that Haydar's second wife, Meyase, was really only a mistress.

In 1931 Haydar and his brother-in-law, Mehmet Körali, were partners in their farming. They had been drinking rakı at Yalmanlı and began quarreling. Mehmet Körali stabbed Haydar with a knife, and he died of his wound or wounds.

I think that neither Zeynep Karadöl nor Güllü Tahir were eyewitnesses of the stabbing and probably neither saw Haydar's wounds afterward. However, both gave information about where Haydar had been stabbed. Zeynep said that he had been stabbed three times. She first pointed to her own left flank as the site of one stab, and then, when we asked about the other wounds, she said they were in the back. Güllü Tahir recalled that Haydar had received one wound on the right shoulder and another in the right side, in the general region of the liver. Her statements were clearly discrepant with those of her sister-in-law and also with secondhand testimony from Mehmet Karaytu himself. Mehmet told us (in 1967) that when he first met Haydar Karadöl's father, Ali, he had convinced him that he was Haydar reborn by the details he told of how Haydar had been killed. Ali then asked Mehmet to show where on his body he had been fatally stabbed in the previous life. Mehmet showed him the birthmark on his back, and Ali said that it was at exactly the place where Haydar had been stabbed. This correspondence further strengthened Ali's belief that Mehmet was his son reborn.

Reşat Bayer and I tried to obtain a copy of the record of the trial of Mehmet Körali for the murder of Haydar Karadöl. However, the record could not be traced, and it had probably been destroyed. I like to interview murderers involved in these cases—especially with regard to the location of wounds—but Mehmet Körali had died in about 1950.

I am unsure of the date of Haydar Karadöl's death. Mehmet Karaytu's identity card (not necessarily reliable) gave his date of birth as June 6, 1931. In November 1967, Fatme Sabuncu, Haydar's daughter, said that she was then 38 years old and that she had been 3 years old when her father died. This would make 1932 the year of Haydar's death. No one suggested, however, that Mehmet had been born before Haydar had died, and Fatme might easily have been a year or more off in giving her age. I conclude, therefore, that Haydar Karadöl probably died during the early months of 1931. Mehmet Karaytu said that he was born within a week of Haydar's death, but he did not provide any evidence for this statement, and we did not obtain any from other informants.

I did not learn Haydar's age when he died from any member of his family. Mehmet said that he had been around 30 to 32 years old.

Statements and Recognitions Made by Mehmet

Mehmet's parents said that when he began talking about the previous life, he gave them a detailed account of how his brother-in-law had quarreled with him in

the previous life and then fatally stabbed him in the back. They said that Mehmet had given the names of his mother of the previous life (Zemzem), his two wives (Güllü and Meyase), and his daughter (Fatme). They did not mention that Mehmet had given the name he had in the previous life, and he seems also not to have given the name of the brother-in-law who, he said, had stabbed him. However, Güllü Tahir said that to her Mehmet had stated the name of Haydar Karadöl.

When at the age of 7, Mehmet's grandmother took him to Karayusuflu, he was credited with having made numerous recognitions of members of Haydar Karadöl's family and neighbors. I do not know to what extent other persons may have guided these recognitions. However, Haydar's sister, Zeynep Karadöl, said that Mehmet seemed to recognize her spontaneously. He saw her working in a field, ran to her, jumped into her arms, and said that she was his sister. Mehmet mistook the identity of Haydar's daughter, Fatme. Fatme said that when Mehmet met her he recognized her as his *sister* (of the previous life), but correctly gave her name, Fatme.

Mehmet's uncle Latif told us that Mehmet had indicated to him certain lands that he claimed to have owned in the previous life. At that time Latif himself did not know who had owned the lands, but he made inquiries and learned that they had belonged to Haydar Karadöl's family.

Fethi Sabuncu told us that he had been somewhat skeptical about Mehmet Karaytu's claims to remember a previous life when he first met him. In order to test the boy, he pointed to a man in the distance who was approaching and asked Mehmet to give the man's name. Mehmet immediately said correctly that the man was Ali Sabuncu (Fethi's uncle). This recognition occurred in Karayusuflu, but not at the time of Mehmet's first visit, and so I cannot exclude normal knowledge on his part of Ali's identity.

I shall mention two other recognitions Mehmet made when I describe his behavior.

Mehmet's Statements in 1967. Mehmet claimed that he had forgotten nothing of what he had earlier remembered about the previous life. He seemed to have a particularly vivid memory of how Haydar Karadöl had quarreled with his brother-in-law and been killed. Because his account accords with what his parents told us he had said when much younger (although Mehmet's account was more detailed), I think it worth summarizing here.

Mehmet said that in the previous life he and his brother-in-law, Mehmet Körali, owned a vineyard together at Yalmanlı.[6] One day in 1931, Haydar Karadöl and Mehmet Körali had sold their entire crop of grapes, and they lingered at Yalmanlı drinking rakı and eating some eggs and grapes before they returned to Karayusuflu. Haydar Karadöl's father, Ali, and a relative of Mehmet Körali were with them. A disagreement erupted between Ali Karadöl and Mehmet Körali con-

[6]During our interview in 1971, Mehmet Karaytu said the murder had occurred in Karayusuflu; but this was not a grave error since the two villages are close together. Mehmet's parents told us in 1967 that Mehmet, when young, had said the murder had occurred in Yalmanlı.

cerning some unsettled account. Mehmet Körali became heated and seemed about to strike Ali Karadöl, who at that time was an old man. Haydar Karadöl then intervened on his father's behalf and tried to appease Mehmet Körali. When Mehmet Körali continued to menace the old man, Haydar Karadöl told him to leave his father alone and to fight with him if he insisted on a combat. Thereupon Mehmet Körali struck Haydar Karadöl, who hit back. A general fight then began. Haydar Karadöl concluded it by thoroughly beating both Mehmet Körali and his relative, who had entered the fray. Haydar Karadöl and his father then began to walk back to Karayusuflu, but Mehmet Körali, humiliated by being beaten and afraid that Haydar Karadöl would exult over his victory at his village, took a kitchen knife which lay at hand and stabbed Haydar Karadöl in the back. Haydar Karadöl fell down, but got up and tried to chase his assailant. He could not catch him, but managed to throw a heavy piece of wood at him and knocked him down. Then he himself, weakened from the effects of the wound, fell down again. He was then transported to a hospital. Mehmet Karaytu's last memories of Haydar's life were of his still living body being taken to the hospital in a cart drawn by a buffalo. Haydar Karadöl lost consciousness before he reached the hospital, so that Mehmet Karaytu's memories of the previous life stopped at this point. He had learned, however, that Haydar Karadöl was still living when he reached the hospital.

Mehmet's Behavior Related to the Previous Life

Circumstances and Manner of Mehmet's Speaking about the Previous Life. I learned little to include under this heading. Mehmet himself said in 1967 that, although he had had memories of the previous life when much younger, he had not spoken about them to other persons until he was 6 or 7 years old. However, his parents remembered him to have been between 3 and 4 when he first spoke about the previous life. They said also that Mehmet was constantly asking to be taken to Karayusuflu.

Mehmet's Attitude of Vengefulness toward Mehmet Körali. When he was still a young child, Mehmet found a photograph of Mehmet Körali and another man. (The other man in the photograph had sent a copy of it to someone in Mehmet's family; informants differed about the person to whom the photograph was sent.) Mehmet recognized Mehmet Körali in the photograph, and when no one was watching, he bored two holes in the eyes of Mehmet Körali in the photograph.

When Mehmet was about 12 years old, Mehmet Körali, who had served a long prison term for killing Haydar Karadöl, happened to come to Kavaklı, where Mehmet recognized him. He then said in Mehmet Körali's hearing that he was the man who had killed him in a previous life. Upon hearing this Mehmet Körali left the village precipitately. Diyap Karaytu, who described this episode, was not an eyewitness of it himself; he said that Mehmet (Karaytu) had told him about it the next day. At that time Mehmet Karaytu told his father that he wanted to kill Mehmet Körali.

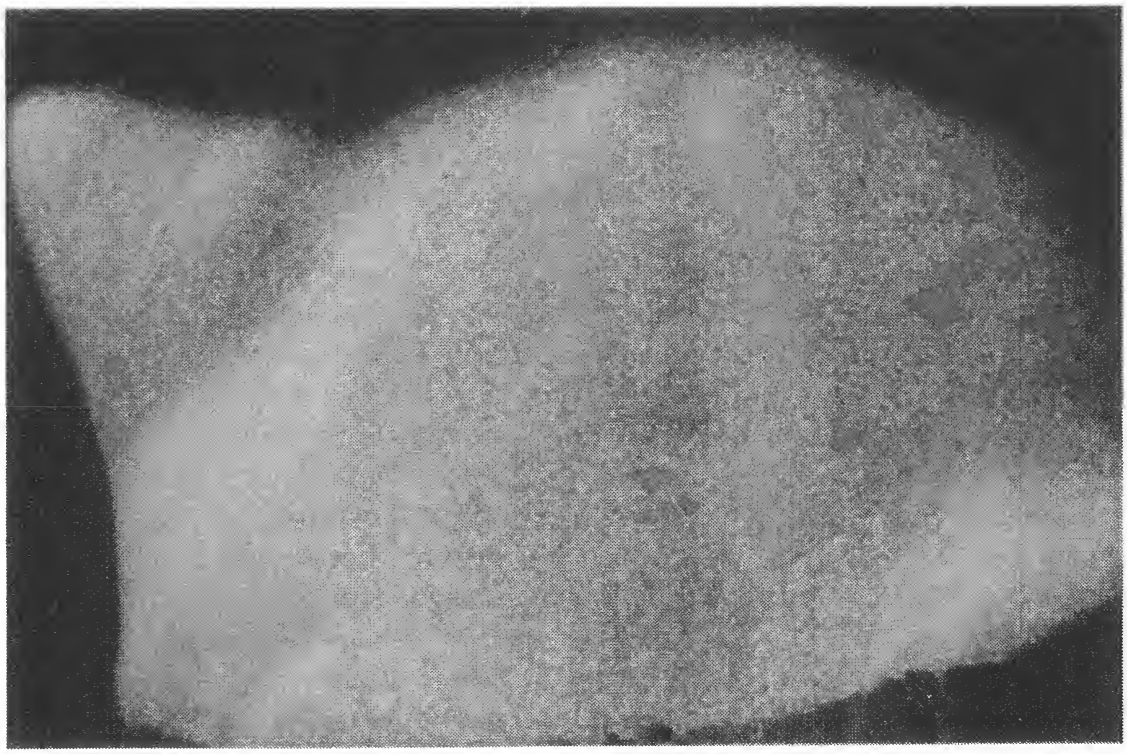


Figure 12-13 Birthmark on the back (lower thoracic region) of Mehmet Karaytu as it appeared in 1971, when he was about 40 years old. The birthmark was a depressed area, triangular in shape and having a puckered surface. It was about 6 millimeters at its widest and about 2.5 centimeters long.

Mehmet Karaytu's Birthmark

Figure 12-13 shows Mehmet Karaytu's birthmark as it appeared in 1971. It was located in the lower thoracic region of his back. It extended from the midline about 2.5 centimeters to the left. It was depressed about 1 millimeter below the surrounding skin and had a somewhat puckered surface. At the midline it was about 6 millimeters wide and tapered to a point laterally, so that it had a distinctly triangular shape.

Mehmet Karaytu's parents and his uncle, Latif, all agreed that he had at birth a "wound" in his back. Although Kâmile Karaytu's word (as she described the birthmark) was translated as "wound," she said that the site showed a swelling, but no opening of the skin when Mehmet was born. She consulted her sister, and they decided that they should open the swollen area with a pin. When they did this, blood oozed out of the opening. The area then continued to drain for a month, when it healed up. From this description it appears that a layer of fine skin covered what was, or became, an ulcer in the area. Latif Karaytu, who was living with his brother when Mehmet was born, said that he saw the baby 2 days after its birth and found the bleeding birthmark "very impressive."

Mehmet Karaytu has never experienced any pain in the region of the birthmark.

Comment. A long knife, thrust deeply into the body at the site shown in Figure 12-13, would have passed through or near the aorta and some of its large tributaries. It could have punctured or severed one or more of these arteries or their associated veins. Death from hemorrhage and shock could have ensued within an hour or two. I mention these possibilities because they accord with Mehmet Karaytu's statement that Haydar Karadöl was still living when he arrived at the hospital—the nearest would have been in Adana—which it would have taken at least an hour to reach by a buffalo-cart.

During the years 1967-1971, I was still groping my way toward an understanding of how best to investigate these cases. In later years I would have asked Haydar Karadöl's wife and sister to tell me the basis for their statements about the wounds on his body, which, as I have mentioned, I think neither of them would have seen with their own eyes. Reşat Bayer and I had considerable success in obtaining death certificates and postmortem reports for cases in Turkey, and I may have minimized the importance of what members of Haydar's family said about his wounds through overconfidence that we would find a written record with definitive information.

Both Zeynep Karadöl and Güllü Tahir said that Mehmet Körali had stabbed Haydar Karadöl with a *knife*, but they did not specify what kind of a knife he had used. This, however, was a detail vividly clear to Mehmet Karaytu in 1967—although whether from his own imaged memories as he claimed or from normally acquired knowledge I cannot say. He remembered that the group of relatives had been drinking rakı and eating eggs and grapes. They had been cutting the eggs with a knife, and the knife still lay on the table when they began quarreling. It was this knife that Mehmet Körali seized and used when he stabbed Haydar Karadöl. The kind of knife used derives its importance from the blades that different weapons may have. Daggers are two-edged and kitchen knives one-edged.

Gross (1934) stated that wounds caused by single-edged knives and double-edged ones could not be distinguished from their appearance. However, Simpson and Knight (1947/1985) and Gresham (1975) asserted that the form of a stab wound may indicate whether the weapon had a single cutting edge or two. Figure 12-14 shows the two types of knives and the shapes of the wounds they usually cause. Figure 12-15 shows the wounds on the body of a woman killed in England with a kitchen knife; and some of her wounds were distinctly triangular. Other wounds visible in the photograph are longer and lenticular, indicating that the knife, after being stabbed into the body, was pulled across the tissues. I believe that the triangular shape of Mehmet's birthmark accords with his statement that Haydar Karadöl was stabbed with a kitchen knife.

The birthmark on Henry Demmert III (Figure 6-17) had a somewhat triangular shape, although its triangularity was much less distinct than that of Mehmet Karaytu's birthmark.

In contrast, the birthmarks of Ali Uğurlu and Nasruddin Shah were lenticular in shape, suggesting a correspondence with wounds caused by a double-edged weapon. Unfortunately, I failed to learn what kind of a knife Ali

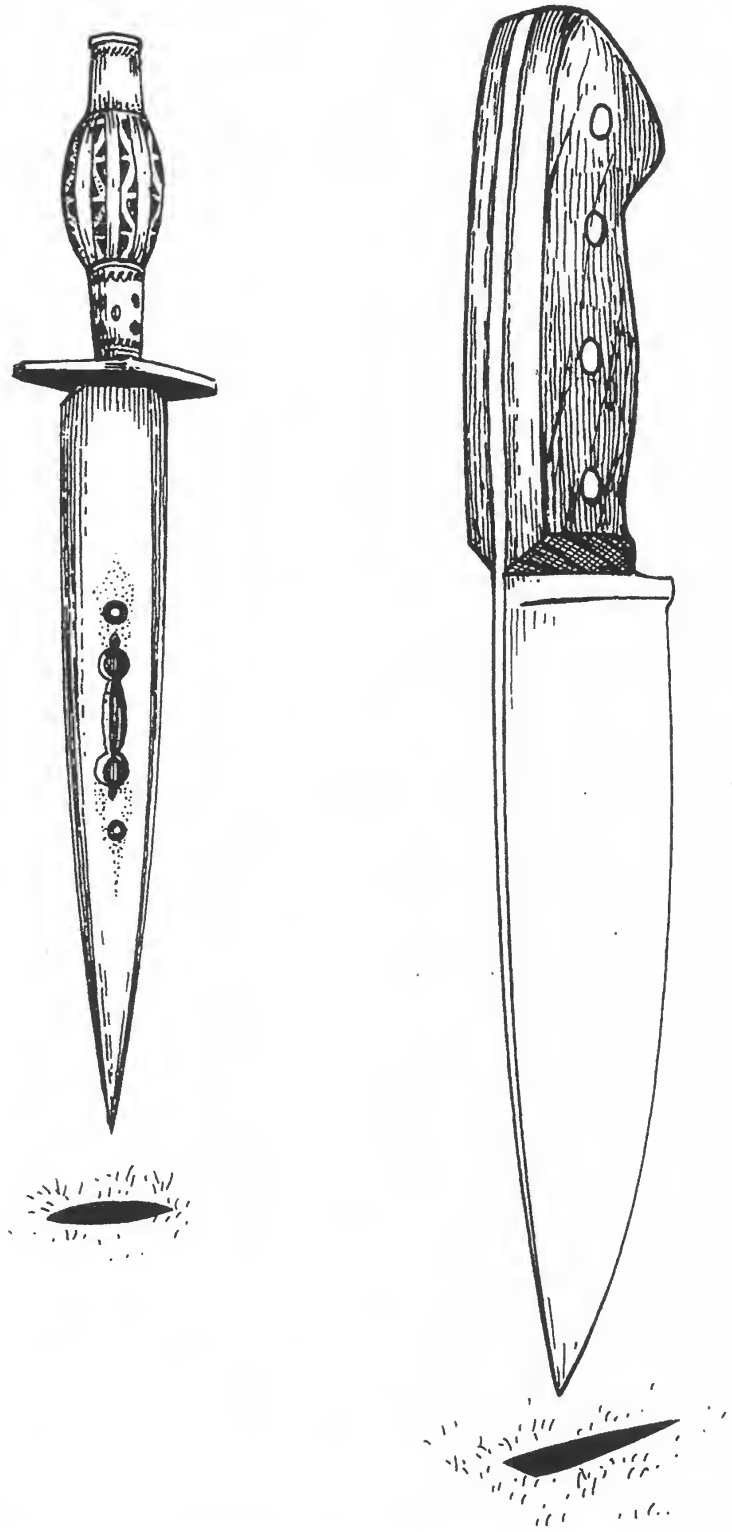


Figure 12-14 Two types of bladed weapons. That on the left is a two-edged dagger from Italy, which would characteristically make a lenticular wound. That on the right is a single-edged kitchen knife from the United States, which would characteristically make a triangular wound.

Figure 12-15 Body of a woman murdered with a kitchen knife in England. Several of the wounds had a distinctly triangular shape. (Courtesy of Professor G.A. Gresham.)

Ümran had used when he stabbed Süleyman Abdülatif, whose life Ali Uğurlu remembered. In Nasruddin Shah's case, we know that a double-edged spear was used in killing Hardev Baksh Singh. The birthmarks on Charles Porter and Derek Pitnov (described later in this chapter) had an elongated, rhomboid form that corresponded to the kind of slitlike wound that a double-edged spear would make.

Other Relevant Observations

In 1971 Mehmet Karaytu said that he no longer felt vengeful toward Mehmet Körali. Although the death of Mehmet Körali some 20 years earlier might have abated Mehmet Karaytu's animosity toward him, I have no reason to doubt the sincerity of the forgiving attitude he expressed in 1971.

At the age of about 15, Mehmet Karaytu began to suffer from "rheumatism." This was, according to my appraisal, a moderately severe form of rheumatoid arthritis. By 1971, when he was 40 years old, his neck was almost fully ankylosed so that he could turn his head only with difficulty. He walked slowly, somewhat bent over, and with the help of a stick. This advanced arthritis had no obvious connection with the life of Haydar Karadöl. Mehmet Karaytu could think of nothing in Haydar Karadöl's life, or in his own, with which to reproach himself. He speculated that perhaps the arthritis resulted from some misconduct in a more remote previous life.[7]

Comments on the Evidence of Paranormal Processes in the Case

I have followed the general policy of not assigning a location to a wound on the concerned previous personality of a case on the basis of the subject's birthmark or birthmarks. In cases like the present one in which the testimonies about the location of the wound are discrepant, I have conservatively assigned the case to a category of lesser certainty than those in which I felt more confident about the evidence concerning the location of the previous personality's wound. Nevertheless, I am inclined to believe that Haydar Karadöl was stabbed in the back at the location of Mehmet Karaytu's birthmark. We have no other satisfactory explanation for his having such a birthmark in that area. Three qualified informants agreed that Mehmet Karaytu had been born with a birthmark at the site shown in Figure 12-13; and informants of both families concerned agreed that he had shown surprising knowledge about the family of Haydar Karadöl. He appears also to have recognized some of the members of this family when he saw them. Furthermore, all qualified informants agreed that Haydar Karadöl was stabbed to death. Discrepancies in the testimony concerning his death occurred only with respect to the place or places on his body where he had been stabbed. If he was not stabbed in the back at the site of Mehmet Karaytu's birthmark, however, why did Mehmet Karaytu have a birthmark there and not elsewhere?

[7]I explained in my book reporting cases in Turkey (Stevenson, 1980) that the Alevis in general do not seem to link misfortunes in one life with misconduct in a preceding one; but some of them do conjecture the occurrence of such connections, as Mehmet Karaytu did.

THE CASE OF TONG IN SONGCHAM

Summary of the Case and Its Investigation

Tong In Songcham was born in the village of Sao Lao in the province of Kalasin, Thailand, in May or June 1942. Her parents were Bai Poah Pah-Dee and his wife, Tam. Tong In was the third of their nine children. Bai Poah Pah-Dee was a farmer of extremely modest means.

Before Tam became pregnant with Tong In, her sister had a dream that was later interpreted as relevant to this case. However, the dream did not include a person then known to the dreamer. (I shall describe this dream later.) Immediately after Tong In's birth her mother noticed that she had a bleeding wound on her back. When Tam noticed this wound, she and some of her friends began to conjecture that Tong In might be the reincarnation of a woman called See from another village, who had been murdered about a year before Tong In's birth. See had been chopped in the back with an axe by her brother-in-law and instantly killed. This murder had occurred in a village called Nong Khun Puwa.

Although Tong In bled from only one birthmark, in fact she had three birthmarks (Figures 12-16 and 12-17).

Tong In began to speak coherently at the age of about 3, and at the same time she began to make statements about the life of See. In particular, she described how See's brother-in-law had killed her with an axe. Tong In seems to have had no strong desire to visit See's family in Nong Khun Puwa, but she did eventually go there and was credited with recognizing two objects known to See.

Tong In grew up, married a farmer, Soom Sak Songcham, and moved to his village, See Boondrian, where I met her and other members of her family in 1984. Her parents had also moved from Sao Lao, the village where she was born, and I met them in the village of None Sambone.

This may well be as private a case as any could ever be. So far as I know, information about it had spread little outside the persons immediately concerned with it until Nasib Sirorasa and I happened to learn about it in February 1984. We were in Kalasin for the study of other cases and were told of this one by the Ven. Phrakru Vinom Rangsi, of Wat Sa-art Na-dee, who was a witness for another case. In the single day at our disposal (February 19, 1984) we succeeded in meeting a sufficient number of informants to warrant my including the case in this work.

Persons Interviewed during the Investigation

In See Boondrian I interviewed:

Tong In Songcham
Soom Sak Songcham, Tong In's husband
Luey, villager
Sang, villager

In None Sambone I interviewed:

Tam, Tong In's mother
Bai, Tong In's father
Umpon, police officer

Kalasin is in the northeast of Thailand, and Nasib Sirorasa was unable fully to understand the northeastern dialect of Thai spoken by the informants. Accordingly, we were obliged to ask a local woman, Kahnika Suebsarakam, to act as an auxiliary interpreter. On at least one occasion I suspected Kahnika of asking a leading question, but judging by the answers I received to the questions I had posed, I do not think this happened often or that it seriously corrupted the testimony.

The villages of this area were somewhat lawless in 1984, and we were provided with a police escort to go to them. Umpon, a police officer who was part of this escort, volunteered to give some information about the case. In his youth he had been a witness of Tong In's visit to Nong Khun Puwa, where he had grown up.

See's parents had died before 1984, and so had Peng, See's husband.

I am never at my most relaxed when accompanied to interviews by armed policemen. There is an obvious reason for this, but in addition, the police sometimes show signs of restlessness and a wish to get back to their station. This may explain, without necessarily justifying, my failure to ask questions that readers may wish that I had asked, as I myself now do.

Relevant Facts of Geography and Possibilities for Normal Means of Communication between the Two Families

All the places concerned in this case are villages in Ampur Nong Khrun See of the province of Kalasin. Nong Khun Puwa, where See was murdered, is 6-7 kilometers from Sao Lao, where Tong In was born. About halfway between them there is a cemetery (which figures in the case) that is jointly used by the residents of both villages. However, Nong Khun Puwa is closer to a dirt road than Sao Lao, so that villagers from the latter going toward a nearby town to shop or for other reasons would usually pass through Nong Khun Puwa. Tam said that she often used to go to Nong Khun Puwa. The other villages that I have mentioned, where Nasib Sirorasa and I met the informants, are within the same general area, but I failed to make a note of their distances from other places.

As I mentioned above, See's parents had died by the time we investigated this case. Therefore, only Tong In's parents could speak to the question of an acquaintance between the families before the case developed. Tong In's father, Bai, said that the families were not acquainted. He had heard a rumor of See's murder after it occurred. He heard that a man had chopped his sister-in-law with an axe, but he said that he actually had not learned the name of the murdered woman until Tong In herself spoke it. He had, however, learned that the woman had been fatally wounded in her back. When Tong In was born and he saw her

birthmarks, he thought that she might be the reincarnation of the woman who had been killed with an axe wound in her back.[8]

Tong In's mother, Tam, seemed better informed about the murder. She thought that she had probably heard about it the day it occurred. She also had heard, at least before Tong In's birth, the name of the murdered woman and how she had been killed.

To the above information Tong In herself added that there had been no contact between the two families before her case developed.

Independently Verified Facts of See's Death

In 1984 Tong In made a number of statements about See's life that may have derived from information she had learned normally or may have been residual memories of the previous life, as she herself thought they were. However, given the witnesses and time available I was only able to verify independently the bare facts of how See had been killed.

She was married to a man who quarreled with his brother over an inheritance. The brother-in-law became enraged and was going to kill his brother, who fled. Still angry, the brother-in-law turned on his brother's wife and chopped her with an axe, fatally wounding her in the back.

Tong In's father thought the murder occurred in June and that Tong In had been born the following June. If we accept the age of 42 given for Tong In in 1984, See's murder occurred in the spring or summer of 1941.

Statements and Recognitions Made by Tong In

Tam said that one day in March (when Tong In was about 3 years old) she prepared a special type of noodles, *kanomchien*, for the family's meal. Tong In asked her what the food was; and when her mother told her, Tong In said that she had never seen it before. This seemed like a strange remark for such a young child to make, and so Tam asked Tong In where she had been that she had never before seen kanomchien. Tong In then replied that she had lived in Nangloompo.[9] She said her name was See and that her husband's brother had killed her with an axe. The murderer, she said was called Tao. (His wife was

[8]Because of the difficulties of translation that I have mentioned, I think it possible that Bai may have to some extent unconsciously mixed details of what Tong In said about the murder with what he himself had learned normally before she spoke about it.

The important points remain that Tong In's parents had heard about See's murder before Tong In's birth (and probably soon after the murder occurred); and that they had had no personal acquaintance with See and her family before the case developed.

[9]The correct name of See's village is Nanglimpook. I did not notice the discrepancy at the time, and I cannot now say whether it is due to Tong In's first mispronunciation of the name as a child of 3, to faulty transmission by the interpreter to me, or to a mistake in note-taking by me.

called Bing.)[10] The murderer chopped her three times with the axe. After the third stroke he put his foot on her body and withdrew the axe.

Tong In's Statements about the Period After See's Death and Before Her Birth. Tam said that Tong In told her that after dying as See she, as a discarnate personality, stayed at See's house. She remembered seeing living people having meals, but no one invited her to eat with them.[11]

Continuing her narration of these postmortem events, Tong In said that after a time—not specified as to length—she walked from Nong Khun Puwa toward Sao Lao. On the way she met four women and touched each of them. Tam was the coolest, and so she followed her.[12]

Luey, a villager who volunteered information, recalled that when Tong In was young, she had said that as a discarnate personality she had not wanted to follow the body of See all the way into the cemetery (between the villages of Nong Khun Puwa and Sao Lao), but had stayed at the fenced boundary of the cemetery.

An Apparently Related Dream. Because of its relevance to Tong In's memories of experiences as a discarnate personality, I will describe here an apparently related dream.

Tam's sister dreamed that four women, including Tam and (presumably) the dreamer, had been in the fields and were returning home. On the way to their village they saw a woman standing (alone). She approached them and touched each of them to see which was cold. Tam was the coolest, and so the "spirit" (that is the woman of the dream) chose to "come back with her."

Tam's sister told Tam her dream the next morning. Tam added: "After that I knew I was pregnant." (I did not interview Tam's sister and have given Tam's secondhand account of this dream.)

Tong In's Statements of 1984. In 1984 Tong In was 42 years old. She told us that as a child she could remember the previous life well, "but now the memories have faded." We nevertheless asked her to tell us what she still remembered.

Tong In said that in the previous life her name was See. Her father was called Kheo and her mother Bing. She married a man called Peng, and they had a baby girl called Thao. They lived at Nong Khun Puwa. See was 18 and her baby just 2 months old when Peng and his older brother, Tao, quarreled. (Tong In did not say

[10]Another slip, or possibly a coincidence, occurred here. Tong In told us (in 1984) that See's mother (not her sister-in-law) was called Bing.

[11]Presumably the living people did not invite the discarnate See to eat because she was invisible to them.

The topic of eating relates to the belief among Buddhists that an "earth-bound spirit," called a preta (*peta* in Pali), is considered to be hungry. I referred to them in the report of the case of Chanai Choomalaiwong and have given further details about them elsewhere (Stevenson, 1983a).

[12]The inhabitants of Thailand, which has a hot climate, consider a cool body desirable. According to a popular belief, a woman suitable for a king should have a body that is warm in winter, but cool in summer.

what the quarrel was about.) Peng ran away, leaving See behind. Tao was "very angry," and when he saw See, in his rage he struck her on the back with an axe.

Comment. I have already said that what Tong In told us about the previous life might have been residues of original memories (as she thought they were) or derived from information normally acquired; her statements might also have had a mixed origin. If they represent only information about the previous family that she obtained normally, they at least amplify the few details that I could learn from other persons about See's life and death.

Tong In's Recognitions. As I mentioned earlier, Tong In had no longing to go to Nanglimpook (See's native village), but eventually, when she was 16 years old, her father took her there. For a reason that I do not now understand, we did not ask Bai to tell us what happened on this visit to Nanglimpook.

In her teens, Tong In also visited Nong Khun Puwa, the village where See had been murdered. Umpon, the police officer who was a member of our escort and a native of Nong Khun Puwa, said he had been a boy of about 12 when Tong In had come there. He thought that Tong In was about 18 at the time. He remembered that Tong In recognized a tree that See had planted and also a kind of tool for sawing that See had used with her husband.

Observations of Tong In's Behavior

I have already mentioned the occasion, as Tam was preparing kanomchien for the family meal, when Tong In first spoke about the previous life; she was then about 3 years old.

Tam said that Tong In continued to speak about the previous life until she was 16.

I did not learn about any unusual behavior related to the previous life (or otherwise) that Tong In had shown.

Comment. In this case the families concerned, although strangers, were extremely similar. The members of both families were villagers of northeastern Thailand of approximately equal and modest means. The case had none of the socioeconomic or cultural disparities between the families that have figured in many other cases.

Tong In's Birthmarks

Figures 12-16 and 12-17 show that Tong In had still, in 1984, three distinct birthmarks. They were linear and all about 6-8 centimeters long and about 3 millimeters wide. The most superior birthmark was just to the left of the midline at the level of the scapulas. It was also the widest and most prominent of the three birthmarks. It looked like a healed scar of an acquired wound and was slightly puckered. Figure 12-17 is a closeup view of this birthmark.

The lower two birthmarks were less prominent and consisted, for the most part, of linear areas of lessened pigmentation. They were about 3 centimeters to the right of the midline.

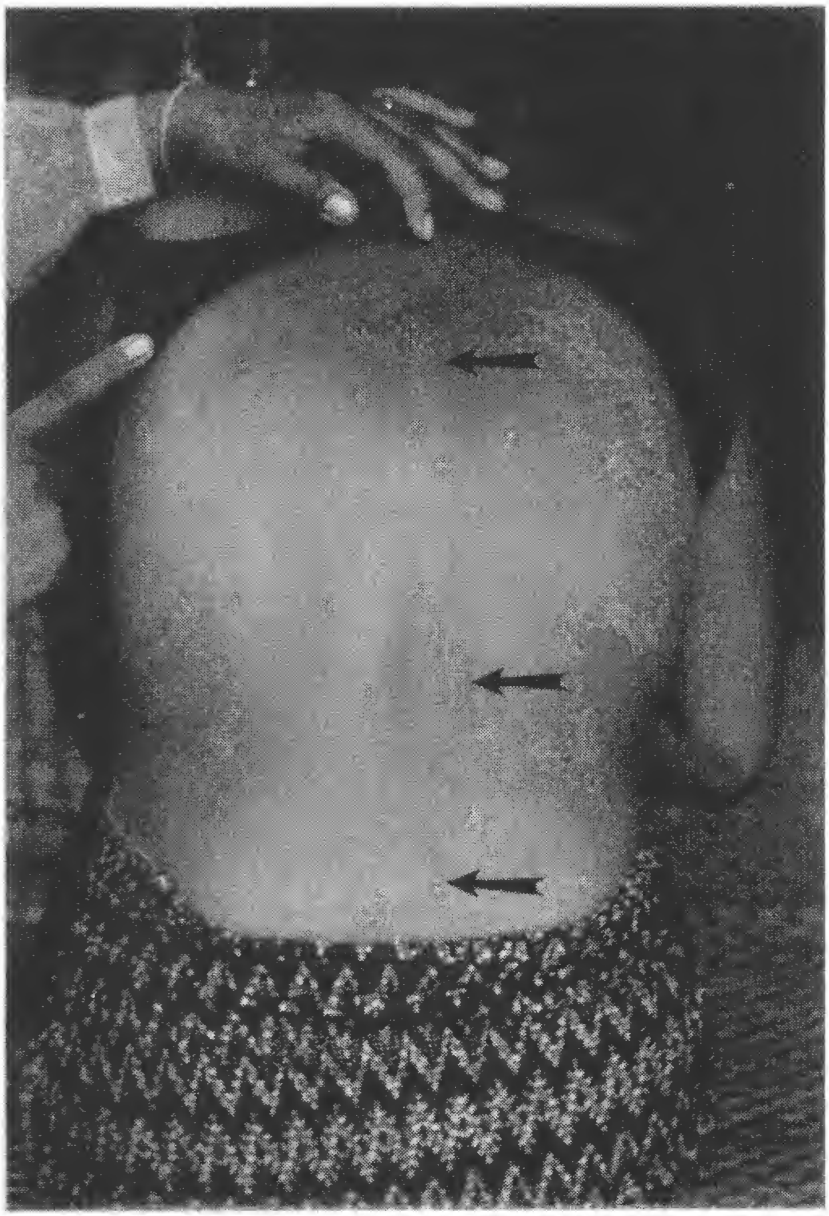


Figure 12-16 Birthmarks on the back of Tong In Songcham as they appeared in 1984, when she was not quite 42 years old. The birthmarks were three linear marks each about 6-8 centimeters long and about 3 millimeters wide. The most superior one was a little to the left of the midline; the two inferior ones were about 3 centimeters to the right of the midline. They were hypopigmented.

Figure 12-18 shows a (modern) axe from Thailand. Wounds from such an axe would make long narrow wounds of a type to which Tong In's birthmarks were said to correspond.

Tam said that when Tong In was born, the birthmark (she referred to *one* birthmark, and she may have been thinking of the most superior of the three birthmarks visible in the photographs) was bleeding. (There was also some pus in the wound.) She said that it continued to bleed for about 7 days after the baby's birth.

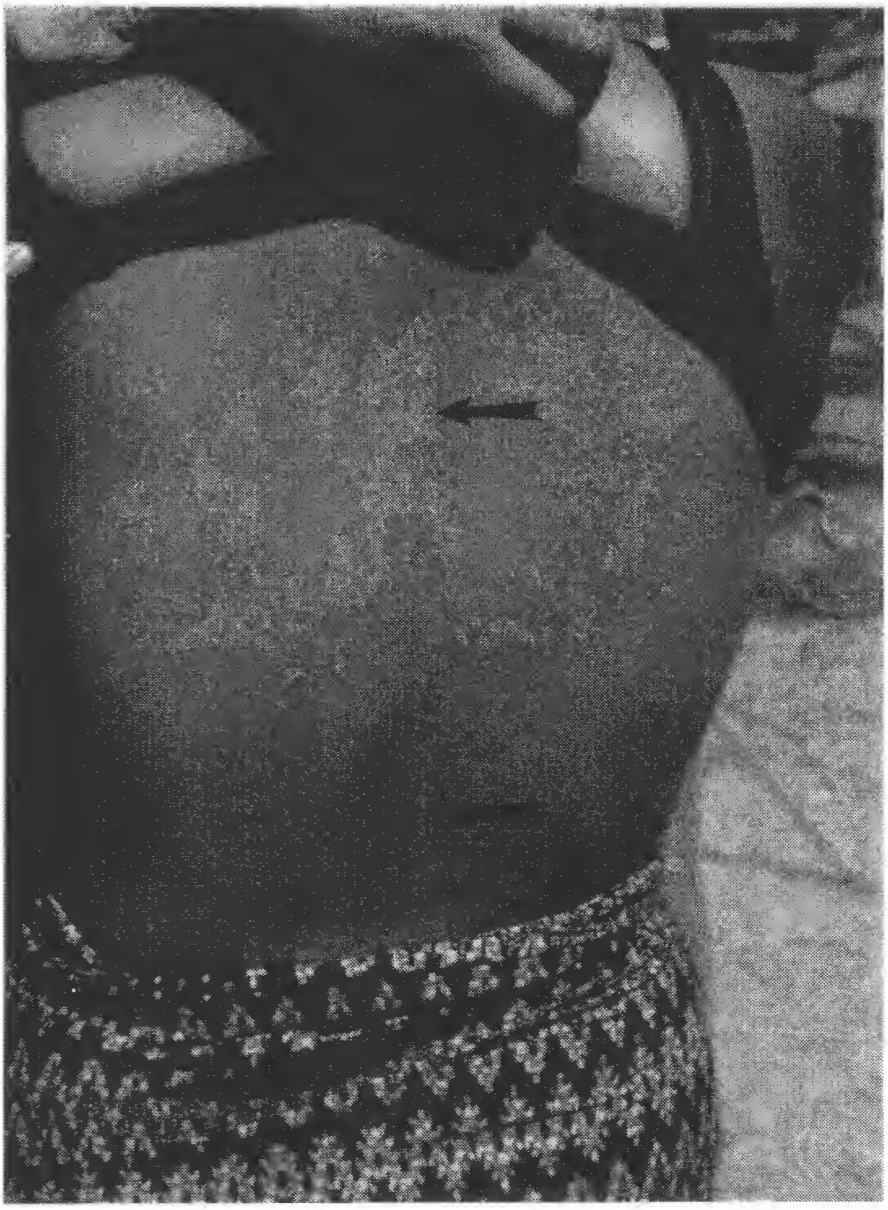


Figure 12-17 Closer view of the superior and middle birthmarks. The puckered appearance of the most superior birthmark can be seen as can the hypopigmentation of the middle birthmark.

She mentioned that she wrapped the baby with some cloth and that when she took the cloth off, it had blood on it. I suggested that perhaps the baby had fallen and that this had produced a wound, but Tam rejected this suggestion.

Tong In said that she had never suffered from pain at the site of the birthmarks. Her general health was good except for occasional headaches.

Comment

I did not verify independently that Tao had chopped See *three* times with his axe. However, since Tong In was correct in the main outline of the murder, she

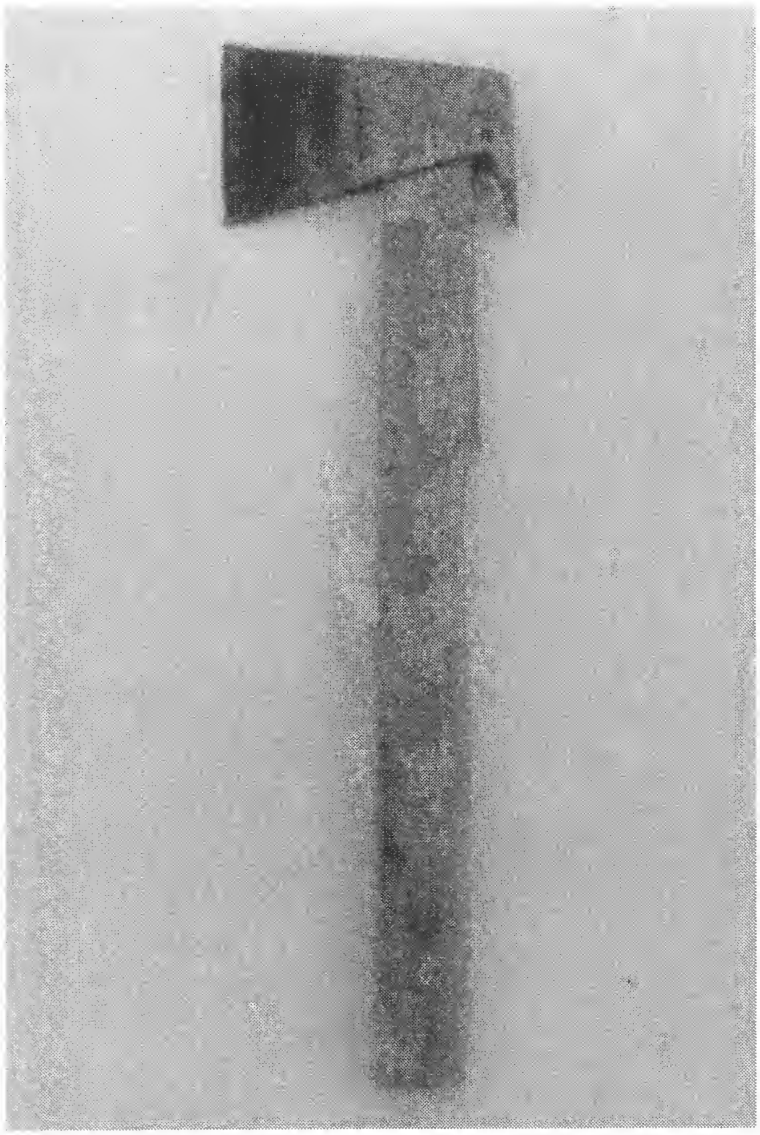


Figure 12-18 Axe of the type that might have been used in the murder of See. I purchased this one at Non Pai, Petchaburi Province, Thailand, in 1986.

was probably right about this detail also. If so, then the case includes a correspondence between three unusual birthmarks on the subject and corresponding wounds on the deceased person whose life and death she claimed to remember.

THE CASE OF CHARLES PORTER

Introduction

I have published elsewhere a detailed report of this case. Accordingly, I will here only summarize its main features and describe Charles Porter's somewhat unusual birthmark.

Charles Porter was one of the first Tlingits I met in Alaska, and he became one of those with whom I was best acquainted. I met him on my first trip to Alaska in September 1961, and frequently saw him again during the 1960s and 1970s.

Summary of the Case

Charles Porter was born in Sitka, Alaska, on February 2, 1907. Both his parents were Tlingits, but they spoke English in the home, and he himself did not learn to speak Tlingit until he was 11 or 12 years old. This is relevant to Charles Porter's statement to me that his parents never discussed Tlingit history when he was a child.

Charles Porter was born with a prominent hyperpigmented macule on his right flank (Figure 12-19). When he was only about 2 years old, he began to say that he had been killed in a previous life during a clan fight in which he had been fatally wounded by a spear. As he said this, he would point to the location of the birthmark on his right flank. (I remain uncertain whether Charles Porter already knew at the time he was first speaking about the previous life that he had a birthmark at this site or only learned this later.) In addition to the foregoing statements he stated the name of the man whose life he was remembering, the place where this man had been killed, and the name of the man who had killed him.

By the time I first met Charles Porter, he no longer remembered the previous life and could only tell me what he remembered his mother having told him later about what he had said as a young child. Thus his account of his statements was secondhand. However, I obtained corroboration for the main features of the case from his older sister and (to a lesser extent) from his mother, who in September 1961 was an old lady of 90 with an impaired memory.

The man whose life Charles Porter remembered was his mother's uncle, and Charles Porter correctly described his death. The man who had killed the uncle was still alive (and living in Sitka) at the time of Charles Porter's early childhood.

Clan fights with spears ceased among the Tlingit between about 1850 and 1880.[13] If we arbitrarily choose the midpoint of this period (1865) for the death of the previous personality in this case, we can estimate the interval between his death and Charles Porter's birth as 42 years. This is much longer than the corresponding period in most Tlingit cases and longer than that of nearly all other cases in this work. However, it is not on that account implausible.

Charles Porter's Birthmark

Figure 12-19 shows the hyperpigmented macule on Charles Porter's right flank. It was located in an extreme lateral position between the lowest rib and the

[13]In my longer report of this case I have given references to works about the Tlingit (or partly concerned with them) from which I have derived the data for the period I have indicated here when clan fighting with spears ceased among the Tlingit.

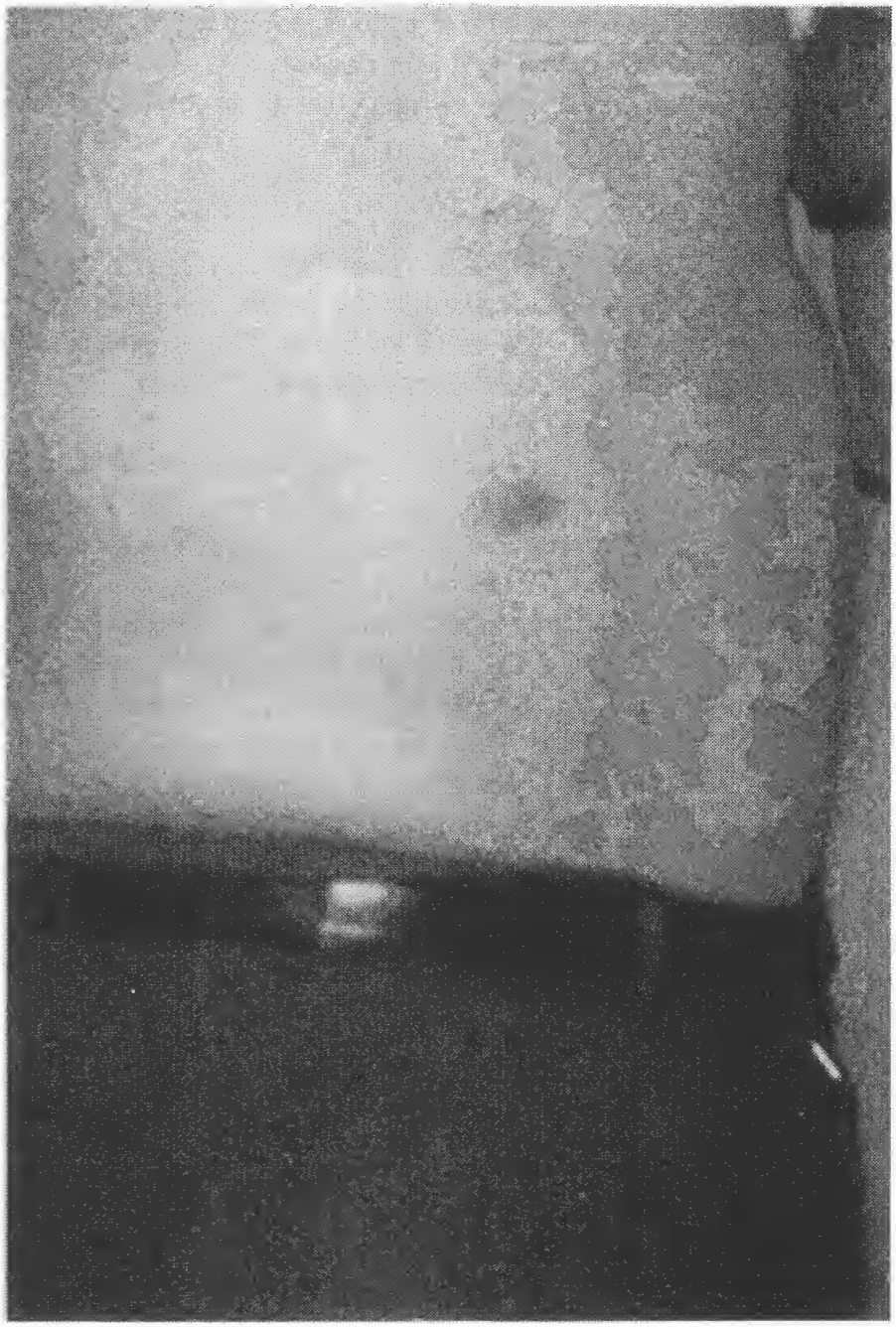


Figure 12-19 Birthmark on the right side of the lower chest of Charles Porter as it appeared in September 1962, when he was 55 years old. The birthmark was a rhomboid-shaped hyperpigmented macule, measuring about 4 centimeters by 1.5 centimeters.

iliac crest. It was about 4 centimeters long and 1.5 centimeters wide. Its general shape was that of a rhombus, and I have placed the report of this case (as also that of Derek Pitnov) in this chapter because the birthmark was much longer in its horizontal axis than in its vertical one; and this would be true of a wound made with a spear like the Tlingit spear shown in Figures 12-20 and 12-21.

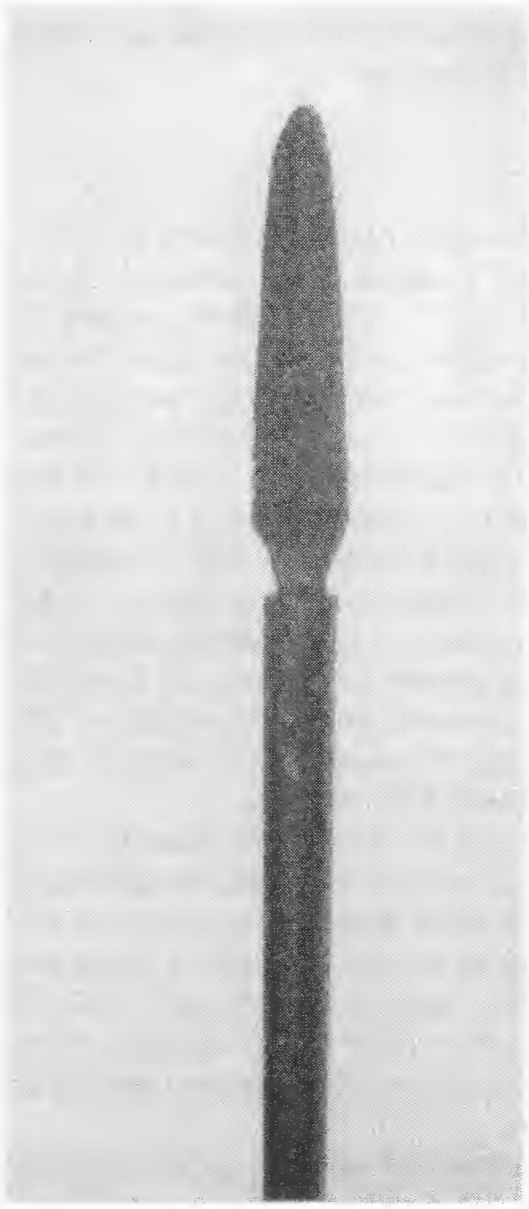


Figure 12-20 Tlingit battle spear. (Courtesy of the Sheldon Jackson Museum, Sitka, Alaska.)

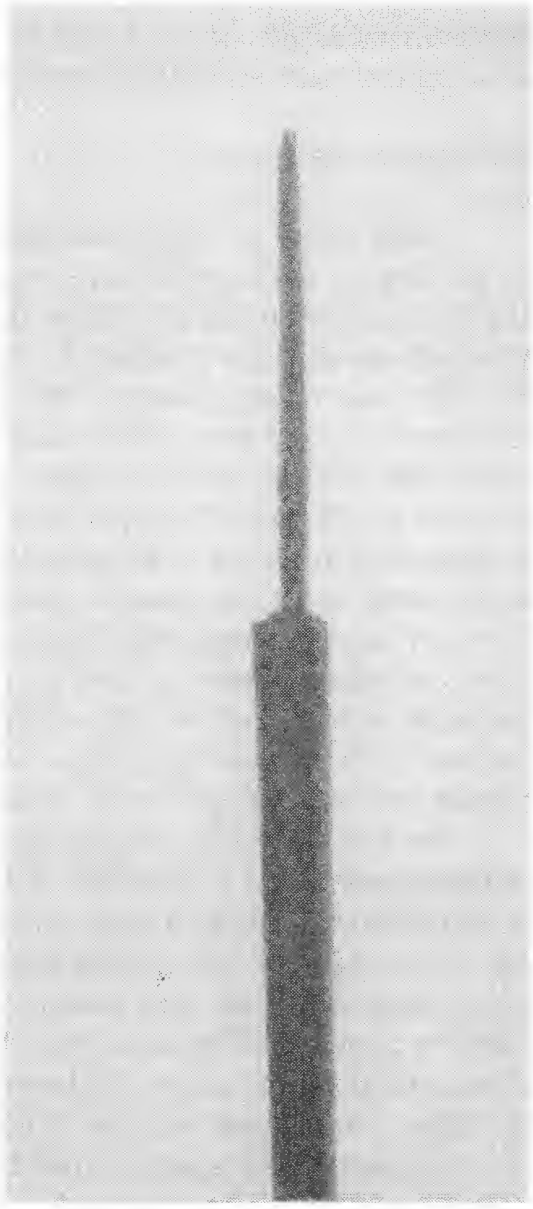


Figure 12-21 Tlingit battle spear showing side view of blade. (Courtesy of the Sheldon Jackson Museum, Sitka, Alaska.)

THE CASE OF DEREK PITNOV

Introduction

I have reported this case in detail elsewhere. I will here only summarize its main features and describe Derek Pitnov's birthmark.

I first met Derek Pitnov in 1962 during one of my early journeys to Alaska. He was then 44 years old, and the firsthand informants for his case often did not

remember its details clearly. I refer readers interested in the strengths and weaknesses of the testimony for the case to my detailed report.[14]

Summary of the Case

Derek Pitnov (a Tlingit) was born in Wrangell, Alaska, on March 22, 1918. At his birth he was found to have a prominent diamond-shaped birthmark on his abdomen, close to his umbilicus (Figure 12-22). When elderly women of Wrangell saw the baby's birthmark, they identified it with the fatal spear wound of a celebrated Wrangell warrior. This was Chah-nik-kooh, who had courageously led a peace-making party of unarmed Wrangells into the territory of the Sitkas, where most of them had been massacred. This massacre can be placed with fair accuracy in 1852 or 1853. A few survivors of the massacre returned to Wrangell and described the deaths of the tribesmen they had left behind in Sitka. The details they narrated about the massacre became incorporated in the oral tradition of the Wrangell people. Persons who respect the accuracy of oral tradition among the North American Indians (at least of a former period) will believe, as I do, that interested members of the tribe could have preserved correct knowledge of the location of Chah-nik-kooh's fatal wound during the approximately 66 years that elapsed between Chah-nik-kooh's death and Derek Pitnov's birth.

Derek Pitnov had no imaged memories of a previous life. He knew from his childhood that he had a birthmark. However, he was not told about the attribution of his birthmark to the fatal spear wound of Chah-nik-kooh until he was in his late 30s. I think this may have derived from a wish on the part of Wrangell people not to envenom further the long-standing hostility between the Wrangells and the Sitkas by retelling old stories of their 19th-century feuds; despite repeated efforts at peace making, some animosity between the two groups had persisted even up to the 1960s, when I began studying Tlingit cases.

It is perhaps advantageous that Derek Pitnov did not learn earlier about the connection older persons had made between his birthmark and the wound from which Chah-nik-kooh died. This makes it unlikely—I could almost say impossible—that two unusual behaviors Derek Pitnov showed derived from any conscious wish on his part to assume the role of Chah-nik-kooh.

The first of these behaviors was a marked phobia of knives and other bladed utensils or weapons. Derek Pitnov remembered having this fear of bladed utensils as a boy, and it persisted into his middle adulthood when I knew him. His two (successive) wives both told me that they had observed this fear in him. It had abated but by no means fully disappeared by the time I knew him during the 1960s and early 1970s.

[14]The present summary omits details about a) the reasons for assigning the death of the previous personality (Chah-nik-kooh) to 1852-1853; b) the grounds for my confidence in the oral tradition concerning the location of Chah-nik-kooh's fatal spear wound; and c) the reasons for my believing that the mark on Derek Pitnov's abdomen was a birthmark even though his mother told me that she had not noticed a birthmark there when he was born.

Derek Pitnov's second unusual behavior was his strong desire to involve himself in the political affairs of Sitka. Although he was born in Wrangell, he chose to make his home in Sitka. There, instead of remaining obscure, he entered politics and actually served for 4 years on the City Council of Sitka. He seemed to feel a sort of mission to improve relations between the Sitkas and the people of Wrangell. It is possible to see in this behavior a resemblance to Chah-nik-kooh's attitude toward the Sitkas, because Chah-nik-kooh was leading a peace-making party of Wrangells when he was killed in Sitka.

Derek Pitnov's Birthmark

I first examined Derek Pitnov's birthmark in 1962, when he was 44 years old. Figure 12-22 shows its appearance at that time. It was located about 2 centimeters to the left of the umbilicus and slightly inferior to it. My photograph is

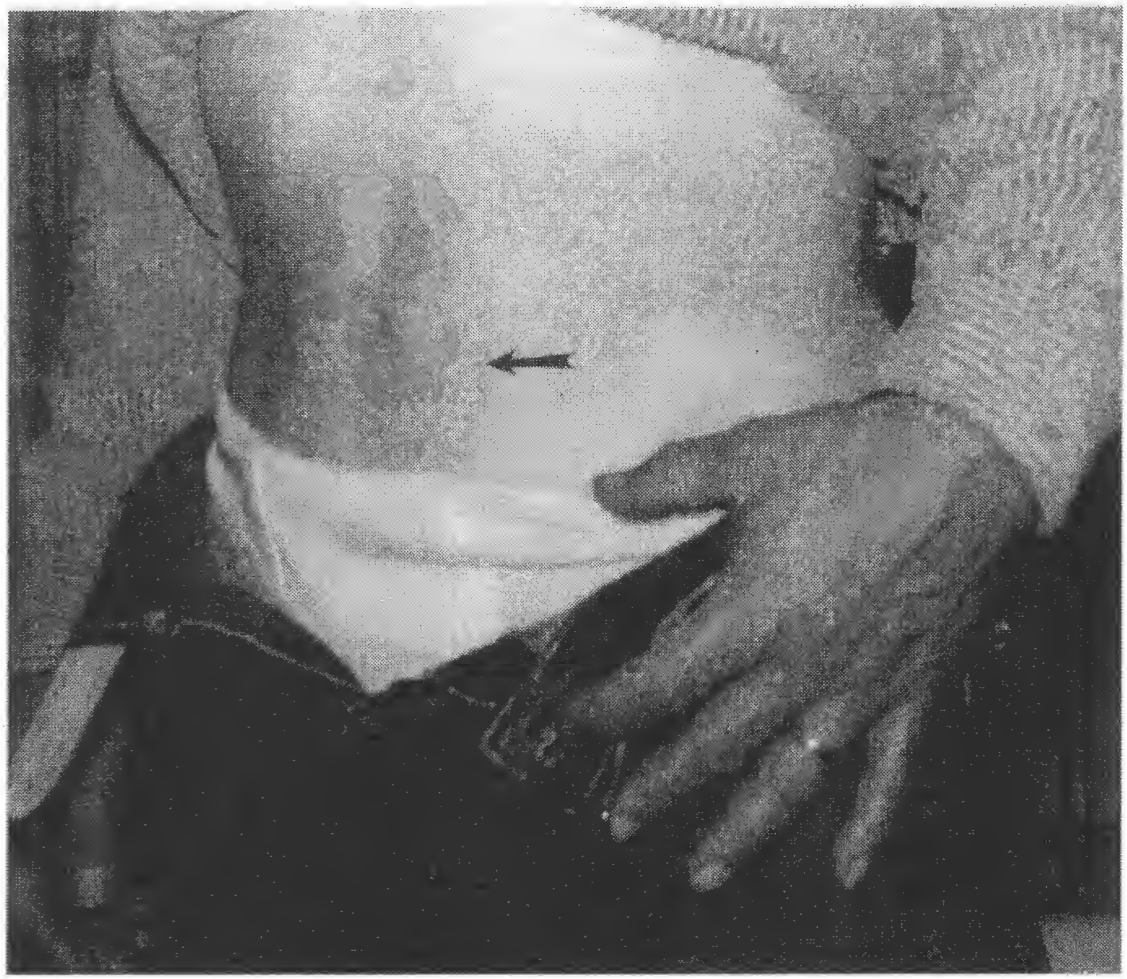


Figure 12-22 Birthmark on Derek Pitnov's abdomen as it appeared in 1963, when he was 45 years old. The birthmark was about 2 centimeters to the left of the umbilicus. It was an area, approximately diamond-shaped, of hypopigmentation; pigmentation or redness seemed increased at its borders. The birthmark measured about 2 centimeters by 1 centimeter.

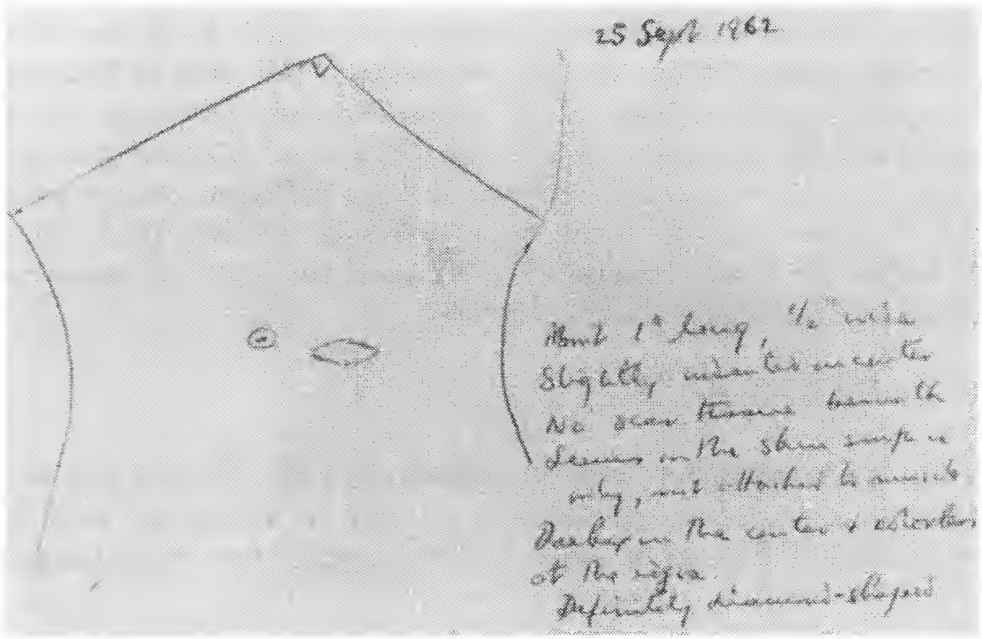


Figure 12-23 Sketch of birthmark on abdomen of Derek Pitnov made on September 25, 1962, when he was 44½ years old. The sketch shows the diamond shape of the birthmark more clearly than Figure 12-22.
My notes, contrary to the appearance and photograph (Figure 12-22) of the birthmark in 1963, describe the center of the birthmark as darker than its margins. The difference may have been due to different temperatures of the skin—with associated different dilatation of blood vessels—on the two occasions.
The sketch erroneously shows the birthmark to be closer to the umbilicus than it was.

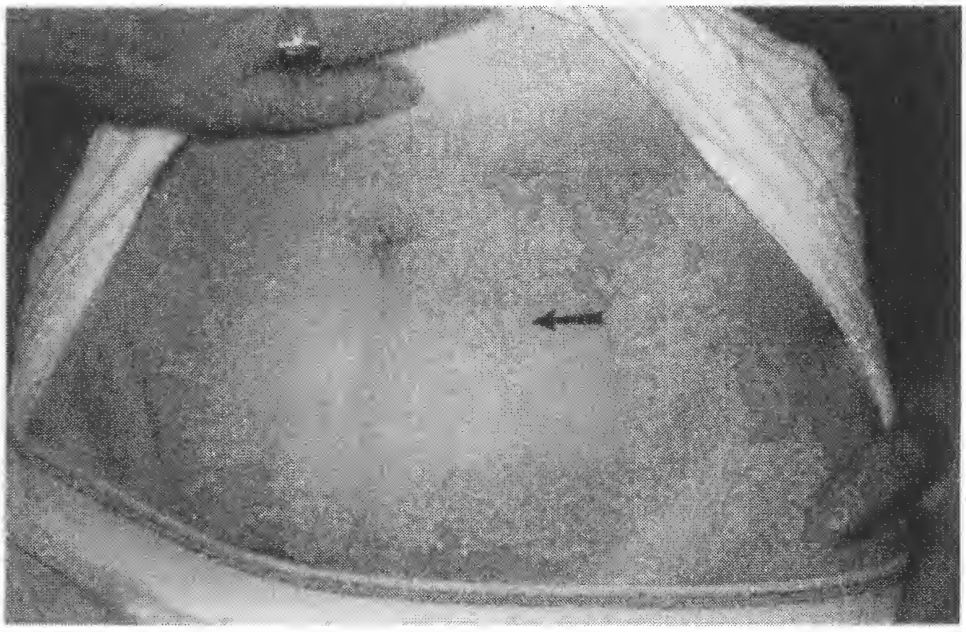


Figure 12-24 Birthmark on Derek Pitnov's abdomen as it appeared in May 1972, when he was 54 years old. The birthmark had lost its diamond shape but was still appreciably longer in its horizontal axis than its vertical one.

far from satisfactory, and some readers may not think that it shows the birthmark to have had the general shape of a diamond. This feature is clearer in my sketch of September 25, 1962 (Figure 12-23). The birthmark was approximately 2 centimeters long and 1 centimeter wide. It was slightly depressed in its center. The center was also slightly hypopigmented compared with the surrounding skin, and its margins were somewhat darker.

Derek Pitnov told me that when he was younger the birthmark had been 2 centimeters longer and much deeper in color. It especially deepened in color when his skin became cold, as after he had bathed in cold water. He said that the birthmark formerly had the appearance of a recently inflicted wound. He had no birthmark on his back that might have corresponded to an exit wound made by a spear entering the abdomen at the site of the birthmark there and passing through to the back.

I was able to examine Derek Pitnov's birthmark again in 1972. By this time he had gained some weight and the birthmark (Figure 12-24) had lost its distinctly diamond-shaped appearance. Nevertheless, it was still appreciably longer in its horizontal axis than in its vertical one. The birthmark was perhaps paler and less prominent than it had been 10 years earlier. It appears more distinct in Figure 12-24 than in Figure 12-22, but this is only because my photography had improved during the nearly 10 years since I took the earlier photograph.

Derek Pitnov suffered from abdominal pains during periods of stress. He still had a tendency to such pain in 1972, at which time they seemed related to gastric hyperacidity, because antacids relieved them.

Comment

The diamond shape of Derek Pitnov's birthmark conformed, like that of Charles Porter, to the kind of elongated wound that could be made by the Tlingit spear (Figures 12-20 and 12-21). Although my photographs may not show it, Derek Pitnov's birthmark had a more distinctly diamond-shaped configuration than Charles Porter's.

The two birthmarks differed in their histopathology. Charles Porter's birthmark was a hyperpigmented macule; that of Derek Pitnov (at least in 1963) was an area of hypopigmentation.

THE CASE OF MA MYINT MYINT ZAW

Summary of the Case and Its Investigation

Ma Myint Myint Zaw was born in Pyawbwe, Upper Burma, on December 14, 1973. Her parents were U Kyaw Tint and Daw Mya Kyin, and she was the fifth child (and fourth daughter) in a family that eventually had eight children. U Kyaw Tint was a farmer.

About a month after Ma Myint Myint Zaw's birth her mother noticed a round birthmark on the instep of her left foot (Figure 12-25). This observation made her think that Ma Myint Myint Zaw might be their deceased son reborn. This son, Maung Pho Zaw, had died after being bitten by a Russell's viper (Figure 12-26) about 1 year before Ma Myint Myint Zaw's birth. The birthmark corresponded in location and shape to a burn at the site of the snakebite that Maung Pho Zaw's great-uncle had made with a lighted cheroot after the boy had been bitten. Two announcing dreams, which I shall describe later, provided additional reasons for Maung Pho Zaw's parents to think that he had been reborn as Ma Myint Myint Zaw.

Ma Myint Myint Zaw began to speak when she was about 1 year old, and when she was about 2, she made a few statements indicating that she had some memories of Maung Pho Zaw's life and death. In addition, she showed markedly masculine behavior and a phobia of snakes.

My assistant Daw Hnin Aye learned of this case in the summer of 1984, and soon afterward she interviewed Ma Myint Myint Zaw, both her parents, her great-uncle (who had been with Maung Pho Zaw when he had been bitten), and one of her schoolteachers.

In February 1986, U Win Maung and I were in Pyawbwe, and we interviewed again all the persons mentioned above. For the most part, our interviews went over ground already covered; however, we obtained some additional information about pertinent details of the case.

In January 1987 Daw Hnin Aye had another interview (in Pyawbwe) with Daw Mya Kyin and obtained answers to questions I had about some details in the case. She also met Ma Myint Myint Zaw and learned about her development during the year since we had met her previously.

Persons Interviewed during the Investigation

In Pyawbwe we interviewed:

Ma Myint Myint Zaw
U Kyaw Tint, Ma Myint Myint Zaw's father
Daw Mya Kyin, Ma Myint Myint Zaw's mother
U Tha Hla, Daw Mya Kyin's maternal uncle
Daw Htwe Pu, one of Ma Myint Myint Zaw's teachers

The Life and Death of Maung Pho Zaw

"Pho Zaw" was actually the pet name of Maung Zaw Thein, who was, both when he was born and when he died, the only son of U Kyaw Tint and Daw Mya Kyin. He also was born in Pyawbwe and, I think, in 1969. This date does not accord with the year of his birth that Daw Mya Kyin gave us, but it fits much better with the information we obtained about Maung Pho Zaw's age at death (a little under 4 years) and the stated interval between his death and Ma Myint Myint

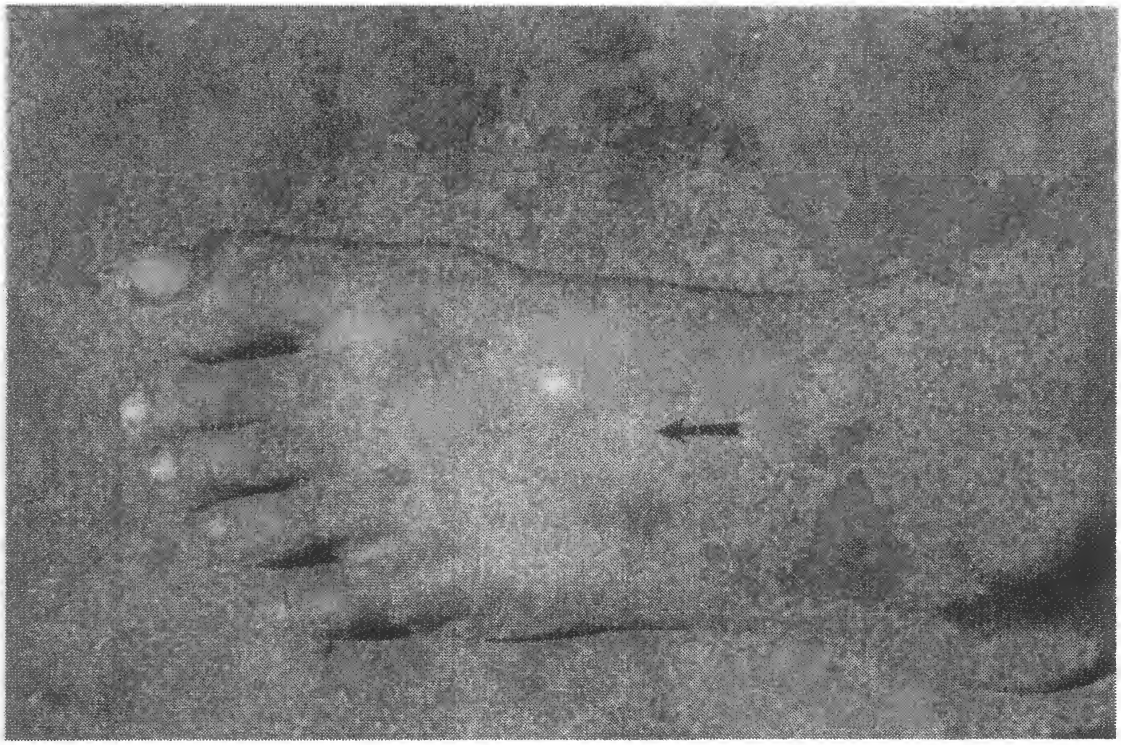


Figure 12-25 Birthmark on the dorsal surface of Ma Myint Myint Zaw's left foot as it appeared in February 1986, when she was just over 12 years old. The birthmark is the round, sharply demarcated, slightly depressed area of scarring and decreased pigmentation near the center of the instep. It was about 1 centimeter in diameter. Some other, smaller scars, probably of insect bites, are also visible.

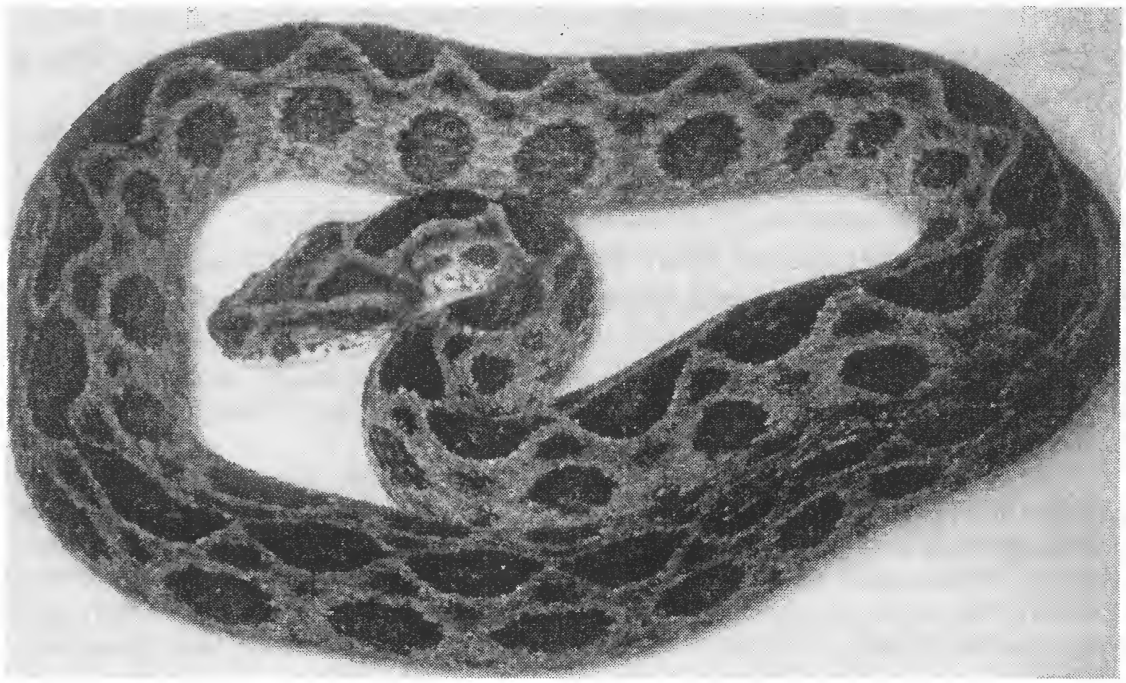


Figure 12-26 Russell's viper (*Vipera russelli siamensis*) from Burma. (Courtesy of Dr. David Warrell.)

Zaw's birth. (Informants for these cases can usually recall information about ages and intervals between events better than calendar years.)

Our information about how Maung Pho Zaw died derives mainly from what his great-uncle, U Tha Hla, told us. Maung Pho Zaw was playing with a top early one morning when he overheard his uncle say that he was going to Myeinigone village. Maung Pho Zaw immediately stopped playing with his top, picked it up, and followed his great-uncle, who took him by the hand. They went across the fields, and as they were going Maung Pho Zaw suddenly cried out in pain. U Tha Hla at first thought that Maung Pho Zaw had stuck himself with a thorn, but the boy himself pointed to a snake curled up nearby and then showed the instep of his left foot, where blood oozed from a bite wound. U Tha Hla, using the string from Maung Pho Zaw's top to make a tourniquet, tied it around Maung Pho Zaw's leg. They were nearly at the road going to Myeinigone village, and some women happened to pass by. One of them was smoking a cheroot, and U Tha Hla took it from her and made a burn with it at the site of Maung Pho Zaw's wound (Figure 12-27). He then hurriedly took the boy to the hospital in Pyawbwe. There the doctors rebuked him for burning the area of the wound.[15]

Maung Pho Zaw died on the evening of the day after he was bitten.[16] Before he died he became delirious. During this period he said that a girl with lots of cakes had come to call him, and he said that he would follow her. His mother, who heard him say this, forbade him to follow the girl, but Maung Pho Zaw replied that he must do so, and soon after saying this he died.[17]

U Tha Hla said the snake that bit Maung Pho Zaw was a viper. He was confident that he could distinguish a viper from a cobra. Burmese villagers can usually correctly identify the type of snake that has bitten them, and it is almost certain that Maung Pho Zaw died from the effects of the bite of a Russell's viper (Myint Lwin et al., 1985).

Maung Pho Zaw's death greatly affected his parents. U Kyaw Tint recalled that when they were burying the boy's body at the cemetery, he spoke to his dead son telling him to come back to them anytime he wished to do so.

The only other relevant detail about Maung Pho Zaw that I learned was that he was—in the judgment of both his parents—a boyish boy, not a girlish one.

[15]Burmese villagers frequently burn the site of a snakebite as an emergency measure. Sometimes they incise the area of the bite and try to suck out the venom, as in the case of Maung Htay Win, which follows.

[16]The pathological effects of the venom of a Russell's viper include activation of the coagulation processes of the blood. This leads to the deposition of microthrombi in the kidney with acute tubular necrosis and consequent kidney failure. The patient's blood becoming incoagulable, serious hemorrhages into various organs may occur. Vasodilation and hypotension also commonly occur and when unchecked may lead to early death (Myint Lwin et al., 1985). In a series of cases of Russell's viper bites studied in Sri Lanka, 16 (51.6%) of 31 patients died within 24 hours of being bitten (Sawai et al., 1983).

[17]Persons who are dying sometimes say that they can see deceased relatives or other discarnate persons who appear to have come to escort them into the postmortem world (Barrett, 1926; Bozzano, 1906). Osis and Haraldsson (1977/1986) have reported modern instances in India.

Figure 12-27 Lighted Burmese cheroot being applied to a foot as in indigenous first aid for a snakebite. The two black marks were made to indicate the bites of a snake's teeth.

Two Announcing Dreams

A near neighbor of Maung Pho Zaw's family, U Pyone Cho, dreamed about him after his death. U Pyone Cho had died before we investigated the case, and he seems to have told only Daw Mya Kyin about his dream; but U Kyaw Tint remembered (from his wife's earlier narration of it to him) some details that she omitted in her account to us.

U Pyone Cho worked as a carter of drinking water, which he conveyed to homes of the town in a barrel on a cart. His trade took him past the cemetery where Maung Pho Zaw had been buried. In the dream Maung Pho Zaw told U Pyone Cho that he was staying (as a discarnate personality) near the cemetery and close to the railway line. He said that he wanted to go home, but could not find the way, and he asked U Pyone Cho to lead him there. Still in his dream, U Pyone Cho led the child to the house of U Kyaw Tint and Daw Mya Kyin. (His own house was only two houses from theirs.) He saw Daw Mya Kyin standing in the doorway, and he handed the boy over to her; she took him in her arms. The next day U Pyone Cho told Daw Mya Kyin about his dream.

Daw Mya Kyin had no dream corresponding to U Pyone Cho's. However, U Kyaw Tint had one. He was away at Myingyan when U Pyone Cho had his dream

and told Daw Mya Kyin about it. He returned to Pyawbwe the day after and said that while he had been away he had dreamed that Maung Pho Zaw came to him and told him that he had returned home.

U Kyaw Tint thought that he had his dream about 2 months after Maung Pho Zaw's death. He also thought that Daw Mya Kyin became pregnant with Ma Myint Myint Zaw 2 or 3 months after the dreams. However, Daw Mya Kyin herself—whom I consider a more reliable authority in this matter—said that she was in the first month of her pregnancy at the time of the two dreams. If we assume her to be correct, the interval between Maung Pho Zaw's death and Ma Myint Myint Zaw's birth would be a little less than a year.

Statements Made by Ma Myint Myint Zaw

Ma Myint Myint Zaw made only a few statements about the previous life. She said that she was Pho Zaw. She also said that she had been bitten by a snake, and she pointed to her left foot to indicate where the snake had bitten her. (She did not say what kind of a snake had bitten Maung Pho Zaw.)

Ma Myint Myint Zaw somehow found Maung Pho Zaw's clothes, pulled them out, and said they were her clothes.

Ma Myint Myint Zaw's Behavior Related to the Previous Life

Circumstances and Manner of Ma Myint Myint Zaw's Speaking about the Previous Life. I mentioned above that Ma Myint Myint Zaw began to speak when she was about 1 year old, but she seems to have made no reference to a previous life until she was about 2. She then strongly resisted an effort by her parents to make her wear earrings; and at about the same time she began to say that she was Pho Zaw.

Ma Myint Myint Zaw's Phobia of Snakes. Ma Myint Myint Zaw had a marked phobia of snakes. This persisted up to the time of our investigation of the case when she was 12 years old. At this age she was afraid to go out of the house after dark for fear of not seeing a snake that might bite her.

Other members of the family were afraid of snakes, but none had a phobia of them like that of Ma Myint Myint Zaw.

Ma Myint Myint Zaw's Masculine Behavior. When Ma Myint Myint Zaw's parents gave her the earrings that I mentioned above, she cried and made such a fuss that her parents gave up trying to persuade her to wear them. At about this time Ma Myint Myint Zaw discovered Maung Pho Zaw's clothes and insisted on wearing them. To appease her, her parents allowed her to do so. From then on Ma Myint Myint Zaw wore boys' clothes almost exclusively.

When Ma Myint Myint Zaw started going to school, she went dressed as a boy and sat in the boys' section of the classrooms. Her teachers at first overlooked this behavior, but an inspector of schools who visited the school in the summer of 1983 did not. In his presence a roll of students of the second grade

was called, and each child was to stand up when his or her name was spoken. When Ma Myint Myint Zaw's name was called, she stood up in the boys' section where she had been sitting and was seen to be wearing boys' clothes. The inspector became angry and reproved the teacher (Daw Htwe Pu) for permitting a girl to attend school dressed as a boy. Daw Htwe Pu happened to be teaching the second class[18] at the time of this episode; and the inspector reprimanded her, although she was not ordinarily in charge of this class. Nevertheless, later in the day she called Ma Myint Myint Zaw to her and told her that henceforth she must come to school dressed as a girl. Ma Myint Myint Zaw burst into tears on hearing this ruling. She continued crying disconsolately. Her parents intervened, and the school authorities felt obliged to make concessions. They agreed that Ma Myint Myint Zaw would come on Mondays and Fridays wearing girls' clothes and would present herself to Daw Htwe Pu so that she could verify Ma Myint Myint Zaw's conformity to the new rule. Nothing was said about Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday, but as there would be no inspection of her clothes on these days, it was tacitly understood that Ma Myint Myint Zaw would wear boys' clothes. However, Ma Myint Myint Zaw found a way around the conformity required for Mondays and Fridays. On arriving at the school she presented herself for inspection and then immediately went to the outhouse, where she took off the girl's upper garment she had been wearing and replaced it with a boy's shirt that she brought in a bag. She then adjusted her longyi to the style of wearing it that boys and men use. Thus attired she would enter the classroom looking like a boy. The school authorities overlooked Ma Myint Myint Zaw's violation of the spirit of the compromise to which she had agreed.[19]

Figure 12-28 shows Ma Myint Myint Zaw flanked by two other girls. They were wearing normal clothing for Burmese girls, and their hair was much longer than Ma Myint Myint Zaw's. She was wearing a boy's shirt and a checked longyi (such as boys and men typically wear), which she had knotted in the front as males do. (Females tuck in the edge of the longyi at the side.)

Ma Myint Myint Zaw wore thanaka paste reluctantly. (It is an almost universal cosmetic among Burmese children, but particularly worn by girls.) She also continued to resist wearing earrings.

[18]At the time of this episode Ma Myint Myint Zaw was 9 years old, and she was behind her age group in being only in the second class. We learned that this was due to her having been entered late in school because the family life had been seriously disrupted when their house had burned down. Ma Myint Myint Zaw was 5 at the time of this calamity.

[19]The compromise reached with Ma Myint Myint Zaw at least enabled her to remain in school. In a similar crisis, Ma Tin Aung Myo, the subject of another case of the sex-change type in Burma, refused to come to school in girls' clothes, but the school authorities insisted that she do this or stop attending. As a result, Ma Tin Aung Myo dropped out of school at the age of 11. In my report of the case of Ma Tin Aung Myo I published a photograph showing her manner of dressing like a Burmese man, which readers may compare with the photograph of Ma Myint Myint Zaw similarly dressed (Figure 12-28).

I have given in the volume reporting Ma Tin Aung Myo's case an analysis of 75 cases of the sex-change type in Burma.

Figure 12-28 Ma Myint Myint Zaw and two other girls of her age in February 1986. Note that Ma Myint Myint Zaw was wearing her hair short, like a boy; she was wearing a boy's shirt instead of a girl's blouse or decorated T-shirt; she was wearing a boy's checked longyi, instead of the patterns favored by girls; and she had tied her longyi in a knot at the front instead of tucking in the end at the side of the waist as the girls beside her had done.

Ma Myint Myint Zaw had some other masculine traits apart from her habits of dress. Although forbidden to sit with the boys in the classroom, she did so anyway and was said to swear in their manner. She also played with boys.

Ma Myint Myint Zaw had to some extent the facial appearance of a boy, but the shortness of her hair may have accentuated this. She was said to have a boy's gait, but although I watched her walk, I am not sufficiently aware of the

differences between the gaits of males and females in Burma to make a useful judgment about this feature.

Ma Myint Myint Zaw appeared to me to be somewhat depressed. She cooperated freely enough with us in answering questions and in posing for photographs; but she completely lacked the joyfulness that I have observed in most Burmese children. I think that she was paying a high price psychologically for her insistence on a gender identity opposite to her anatomical sex.

The Attitude of Ma Myint Myint Zaw's Parents toward Her Behavior

Daw Mya Kyin told us that when she became pregnant with Ma Myint Myint Zaw she had no preference for having a boy or a girl. She would have been equally happy to have a baby of either sex. However, U Kyaw Tint said that he would have preferred to have a boy. (Up to that time Maung Pho Zaw had been their only son.)

Despite his initial preference for a boy, U Kyaw Tint had been quite accepting of Ma Myint Myint Zaw's femaleness. He had been a party to the frustrated effort to have her wear earrings. He said that they had initially tried to stop her from cross-dressing, but she had adamantly refused to wear girls' clothes. He added that later he might have encouraged Ma Myint Myint Zaw to wear boys' instead of girls' clothes. He recognized in himself two motives for this. First, he had not lost his wish to have a boy. Second, he saw how distressed Ma Myint Myint Zaw was when anyone tried to force her to wear girls' clothes. He thought the second was his principal reason for encouraging her to wear boys' clothes. Daw Htwe Pu told us that at the crisis precipitated by the school inspector's visit, Ma Myint Myint Zaw's parents asked the school authorities to be flexible and allow her to wear boys' clothes to school on most days, while still requiring her to wear girls' clothes 1 or 2 days a week. This intervention led to the futile compromise that I described above.

Comment. We cannot doubt that the indulgent attitude of Ma Myint Myint Zaw's parents toward her cross-dressing contributed to her doing so. However, they had not started out to indulge her. Even U Kyaw Tint, who had wanted to have a boy, had accepted Ma Myint Myint Zaw as a girl, and he seems to have been dismayed by the vehemence of her refusal to wear the earrings they had prepared for her when she was 2 years old.

As I mentioned earlier, Maung Pho Zaw was a boyish boy, not a girlish one. However, he died when less than 4 years old, an age when I should have thought he would not have been fully "masculinized." Ampan Petcherat, the subject of a sex-change case in Thailand, remembered the previous life of a young boy who had been about the same age as Maung Pho Zaw when he died. Ampan had markedly masculine traits, and she cross-dressed when she was a child; however, she subsequently developed a more or less normal female sexual orientation.

Future investigators of cases of the sex-change type may be able to learn why the majority of the subjects of such cases eventually adjust to their

anatomical sex, but a minority do not and remain intransigently fixed to the gender of the previous life.

Ma Myint Myint Zaw's Birthmark

Figure 12-25 shows the birthmark on Ma Myint Myint Zaw's left foot as it appeared in February 1986 when she was just over 12 years old. It was a round area of scarring, slightly depressed below the surrounding skin and slightly paler than that skin. It was about 1 centimeter in diameter.

Daw Mya Kyin told us that when she first noticed the birthmark about a month after Ma Myint Myint Zaw's birth, she thought it was some blemish on the baby's skin. It was not then bleeding or oozing. She showed the birthmark to her uncle (U Tha Hla), and he said that it was at the site where he had burned Maung Pho Zaw's snakebite wound with a lighted cheroot. Daw Mya Kyin then remembered the detail of the wound having been burned with a cheroot, and she recalled how the doctor at the hospital had been annoyed over this. She was sure that Ma Myint Myint Zaw's birthmark was at the location of the cheroot burn on Maung Pho Zaw's foot.

U Tha Hla (who had applied the cheroot to the snakebite wound) and U Kyaw Tint also confirmed to us the correspondence in location between the wound (from the snakebite and burn) and the birthmark. However, in 1986 U Kyaw Tint was not positive that he remembered whether Maung Pho Zaw had been bitten on the left or the right foot.

Daw Mya Kyin said that no other member of the family had a birthmark like that of Ma Myint Myint Zaw.

Comments on the Evidence of Paranormal Processes in the Case

This being a same-family case, we cannot credit Ma Myint Myint Zaw with having any knowledge of Maung Pho Zaw's life that she could not have learned normally. Although it seems unlikely that her parents were the sole cause of Ma Myint Myint Zaw's masculine behavior, they certainly encouraged it. This leaves her birthmark as the principal feature of the case having a possibly paranormal origin. I am satisfied with the evidence we have concerning the correspondence between Ma Myint Myint Zaw's birthmark and the cheroot burn at the site of Maung Pho Zaw's snakebite wound.

Ma Myint Myint Zaw's Later Development

In January 1987 Daw Hnin Aye learned that Ma Myint Myint Zaw's parents had withdrawn her from school so that she could help with work at home. Ma Myint Myint Zaw said that she would have preferred to remain at school.

Ma Myint Myint Zaw was still wearing male clothes and spoke of herself with masculine terms of self-reference. (Burmese is a language that has some word forms that differ according to the speaker's sex.)

Note on Other Cases with Death from Snakebite

This work contains the report of several other cases in which the previous personality died from the effects of snakebite.

Our collection of cases includes a total of 30 in which the previous personality died of snakebite. Among these, 13 (43%) subjects had phobias of snakes and 10 (40%) had birthmarks related to the snakebite wound or attempts to treat it.

THE CASE OF MAUNG HTAY WIN

Summary of the Case and Its Investigation

Maung Htay Win was born on November 21, 1970, in the village of Myaukthike (near Tatkon), Upper Burma. His parents were U Maung Pu and his wife, Daw Ma Gyi. He was the fourth of their seven children. U Maung Pu was a farmer.

Maung Htay Win was born with two linear birthmarks on his left forefinger (Figure 12-29). I do not think this led to his being immediately identified as the reincarnation of a deceased person. However, when he was about 4 years old, he said that he was U Chit Saya, and he made a number of references to U Chit Saya's life and death. U Chit Saya had been U Maung Pu's stepfather, and he had died of snakebite.

The case came to the attention of U Win Maung early in 1978, and he investigated it in April of that year. He interviewed Daw Ma Gyi and also U Chan Aye, who was U Chit Saya's son-in-law and a witness of his death.

In March 1980, when I was in Tatkon, U Win Maung and I traveled by Jeep to Myaukthike with the intention of continuing the study of the case. However, when we arrived at the village, we learned that Maung Htay Win had gone into Tatkon that day. Thus I have never met him.

The Life and Death of U Chit Saya

U Chit Saya was born and lived in the village of Myaukthike. His parents were U Shwe Daung and Daw Thinn Ohn. When he grew up, he worked as a farmer. He married Daw Hnin Nyo, and they had four children. U Maung Pu was Daw Hnin Nyo's son by her first husband.

One day U Chit Saya had finished work, and after tying up his oxen he sat down on a pile of ground-nuts. He did not notice a snake that was nearby, and it bit him on the left forefinger. His son-in-law, U Chan Aye, was called from another village. When he arrived, he took a razor and cut the site of the snakebite. He then tried to suck out the venom. However, U Chit Saya died later the same night. Before dying he said that he thought a cobra had bitten him.

I did not learn the date of U Chit Saya's death. He was about 60 years old when he died.

Statements Made by Maung Htay Win

Maung Htay Win first spoke about the previous life when he was 4 years old and was watching his family's oxen being hitched up to their cart. He said: "Don't use these oxen, I have got mine." Asked where they were he pointed to a cattle pen and then tried to search for "his" oxen. He did not realize that U Chit Saya's oxen had long since gone, but he correctly identified where the oxen had been tied up. Maung Htay Win said that he was U Chit Saya, and he asked U Chit Saya's wife, Daw Hnin Nyo, to return his clothes. He also asked for a crossbow that he said belonged to him.

At about the time Maung Htay Win made the above statements he met U Chan Aye. Maung Htay Win held up his left forefinger to U Chan Aye and said that it was the finger that U Chan Aye had cut with his knife.

Maung Htay Win's Behavior Related to the Previous Life

Maung Htay Win addressed the adults of his family as if he were their equal or senior. For example, he disrespectfully called his father "Maung Pu." He addressed one of U Chit Saya's sisters as "Ma Mi," when polite usage would have required him to call her "Daw Mi." He asked Daw Ngo, one of U Chit Saya's daughters, to buy him some clothes. In doing this, he spoke somewhat peremptorily to her, and when she asked him who he was to make such a request, he replied: "I am your father, Chit Saya."

As he grew older, Maung Htay Win became more respectful to his elders.

Maung Htay Win persisted in talking about the oxen that he said he had left in the pen at his farm until he was told that they had been sold. He then stopped talking about them.

Maung Htay Win's Birthmarks

Figure 12-29 shows Maung Htay Win's birthmarks on his left forefinger. They consisted of two linear areas of hypopigmentation. Each was about 1 centimeter long and 0.5 millimeter wide. U Chan Aye told U Win Maung that the birthmarks corresponded to the wound he had made on U Chit Saya's left forefinger in order to suck out the venom from the wound of the snakebite.

Figure 12-30 shows the scars of a healed viper bite on the foot of a person bitten in Sri Lanka. Two distinct depressions are visible.

Comment. Although there are *two* birthmarks, U Chan Aye spoke of making only *one* incision. The snake would have made two wounds (with the two teeth having injection points), and I would have expected U Chan Aye to have made incisions in each wound. It is also possible that the snake's teeth made two gashes and that U Chan Aye deepened only one of these thinking that sufficient to suck out all the venom.

Figure 12-29 Birthmarks on left forefinger of Maung Htay Win as they appeared in 1978 when he was 7½ years old. The birthmarks are two linear areas of hypopigmentation. One is about 1 centimeter long, the other 1.5 centimeters long.

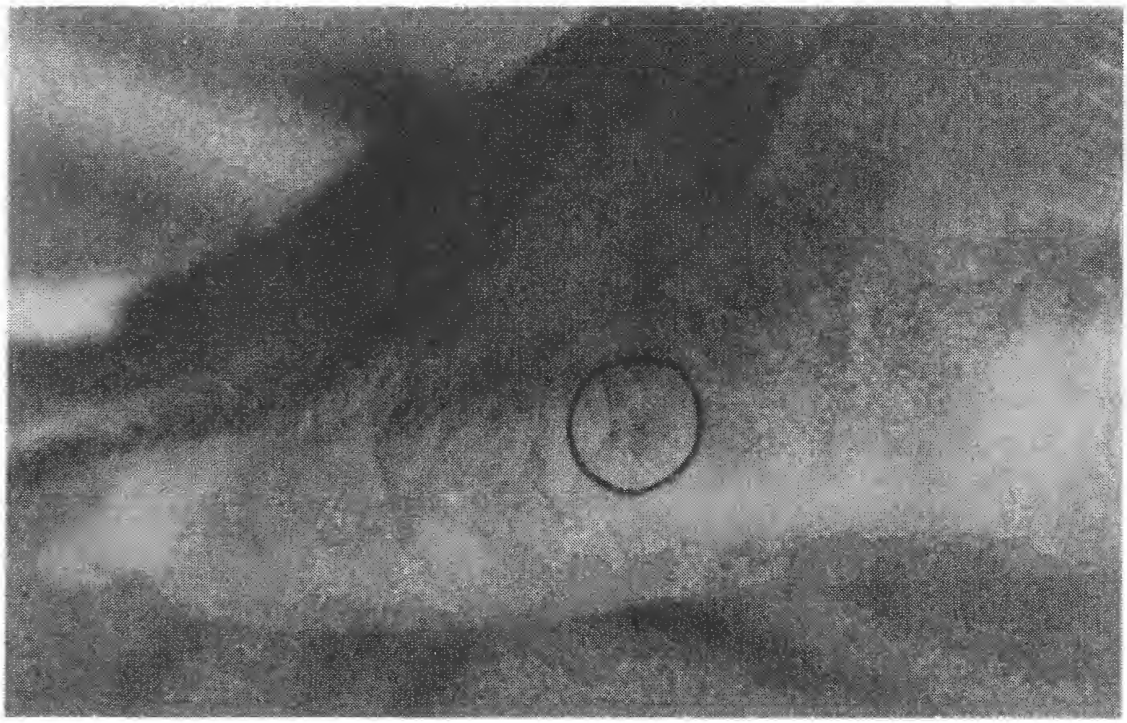


Figure 12-30 Scars of a bite by a viper in Sri Lanka. Two depressed areas close together are visible inside the circle.

THE CASE OF MAUNG NAING

Summary of the Case and Its Investigation

Maung Naing was born on November 10, 1966, in the village of Nyaunglunt, near Tatkon, Upper Burma. His parents were U Tha Gaung and his wife, Daw Kyi. Maung Naing was the fourth of their seven children. U Tha Gaung was a farmer and Daw Kyi was a roadside vendor of foodstuffs.

Before she became pregnant with Maung Naing, Daw Kyi dreamed that a deceased neighbor with whom she had been friendly said that he wished to be reborn as her son. This man, Maung Tin, had died of a snakebite in 1965. Maung Naing was born with birthmarks on his left foot (Figure 12-31), which corresponded with the wounds of the snakebite from which Maung Tin had died. Later, when Maung Naing could speak, he made a few statements about the life of Maung Tin. He also showed a marked phobia of snakes.

The case came to U Win Maung's attention in 1978, and he investigated it in Nyaunglunt in April 1978. He interviewed Daw Kyi and another villager who had been a close friend of Maung Tin. This was U Tin Maung, who was a witness of the circumstances of Maung Tin's death. U Win Maung also met Maung Naing, but Maung Naing said that he no longer remembered the previous life.

As late as 1988 I thought that we could obtain additional information about the case, and I asked Daw Hnin Aye to go to Nyaunglunt equipped with a list of questions that I sent to her. In June of that year she did this. U Tha Gaung and U Tin Maung had died, and so had the abbot at the Pyaw-ywar Monastery who had incised the snakebite wounds on Maung Tin. Daw Hnin Aye nevertheless obtained answers to my questions from Daw Kyi (Maung Naing's mother), Daw Than (Maung Tin's widow), and two other informants. She did not meet Maung Naing in 1988; but in February 1990 she was able to return to Nyaunglunt and met him then.

I have not myself met Maung Naing or participated in the investigation of the case apart from guiding Daw Hnin Aye by correspondence.

Persons Interviewed during the Investigation

In Nyaunglunt U Win Maung and Daw Hnin Aye interviewed:

Daw Kyi, Maung Naing's mother
U Tin Maung, former policeman of Nyaunglunt village
Daw Than, Maung Tin's widow
Maung Tun Aung, Maung Tin's son

In Pyaw-ywar Daw Hnin Aye interviewed:

U San-daw, practitioner of indigenous medicine

U Win Maung met Maung Naing and photographed his birthmarks. As I mentioned, Maung Naing said that he no longer remembered the previous life.

The Life, Death, and Character of Maung Tin

Maung Tin was a resident of Nyaunglunt village, where he had a business as a roadside seller of foodstuffs and toddy (an alcoholic beverage). He married Ma (later Daw) Than, who helped him in his trade, and they had two children, Maung Tun Aung and Ma Yee.

One evening U Tin Maung had gone to Maung Tin's shop in order to buy some toddy. It was then about 9:00 p.m. He was a good friend of Maung Tin, and he was also the village policeman; so he felt entitled to tell Maung Tin that it was then dark and that Maung Tin should close up his shop and go home. He added a warning that if Maung Tin delayed much longer he might be bitten by a snake. To this advice Maung Tin replied somewhat rudely, saying that the snake that would bite him had not yet been born. U Tin Maung repeated his warning, and Maung Tin then closed up his shop and went home. U Tin Maung then went toward his own home. He had not yet reached his home when a villager came running to him with the news that Maung Tin had just been bitten by a snake.

U Tin Maung went immediately to where Maung Tin was. They then learned that the local medical clinic had no antitoxin. U Tin Maung therefore took Maung Tin on a cart to the Pyaw-ywar Monastery, which was about 3 kilometers away. There, the abbot made incisions in the wound and applied some remedies of indigenous Burmese medicine. These were unavailing, and after 2 days the abbot advised U Tin Maung to take his friend home. Maung Tin died on the way to his house. He remained conscious on the journey back, and just before he died he asked U Tin Maung to look after his son, Maung Tun Aung.[20]

Daw Than said that Maung Tin died in 1965 at the age of between 53 and 55 years.

Maung Tin's personal life was far from uncomplicated. He was a heavy drinker and known to be one. He lived next door to U Tha Gaung and Daw Kyi. When he met Daw Kyi coming and going in the village, they would argue and quarrel, and Daw Kyi would berate him as a drunkard. Still, there was some friendship between them. Maung Tin did not find friendship in his own home. His wife, Daw Than, also drank heavily, and in her moments of insobriety she used to swear at him and say: "May a big poisonous snake bite you so that you may die." (Daw Kyi told the story of these domestic rows in the context of describing Maung Naing's memories, which I describe below; as a next-door neighbor, however, she could hardly avoid being privy to the marital discord at Maung Tin's home.)

Maung Tin was a skilled carpenter and had built at least one house in the village. He also had a hobby of catching wildcats.

[20]A discrepancy occurred in the testimony concerning how long Maung Tin lived after being bitten by the snake. In 1978 U Tin Maung told U Win Maung that Maung Tin had lived for about 2 days; but in 1988 Daw Than (who said that she had accompanied her husband to the abbot at Pyaw-ywar) said that he had lived 7 days.

An Announcing Dream

About 2 weeks after Maung Tin's death, Daw Kyi dreamed that she met Maung Tin as she was returning from the market at Yamethin (the nearest town north of Nyaunglunt village). Maung Tin was wearing a light brown shirt and a green checked longyi. He said to her "Hey, Kalamagyi,[21] I am coming to you." Daw Kyi replied: "No, you don't." However, Maung Tin insisted and said: "I am coming with you all the same." And he followed her home.

Daw Kyi had been away from Nyaunglunt when Maung Tin had died and his body had been buried. She had no normal knowledge of the clothes that he was wearing when he died or was buried. She asked Daw Than about his last clothes, and she told her that when Maung Tin had died, she had put on him a brown shirt and a green checked longyi. Upon learning this, Daw Kyi said: "Oh, damn him! Daw Than, I think your drunkard husband has got into my womb. No! No! I won't allow him." Nevertheless she became pregnant within a month, and Maung Naing was born the following year.

Statements and Recognitions Made by Maung Naing

U Win Maung did not record a list of statements that Maung Naing made about the previous life as a young child, but these appear not to have been numerous.

Maung Naing's first reference to the previous life occurred when he was about 3 years old. He had gone with other members of his family to a festival in the village, and they were returning at night. Although there was a bright light from a full moon, Maung Naing refused to walk home saying: "I am afraid of snakes. I do not want to walk." So one of the adults had to carry him home.

When Daw Kyi described the above episode to Daw Hnin Aye in 1988 (10 years after describing it to U Win Maung), she remembered that Maung Naing had said: "On this kind of moonlit night I was bitten by a snake." After this incident, Maung Naing spoke further about the life of Maung Tin. He remembered the drunken quarrels between Maung Tin and Daw Than. He also recalled how he had sponsored a boy called Maung Aung Sein when he was novitiated at a monastery.

Daw Kyi said that Maung Naing recognized a house that Maung Tin had built, saying that he (as Maung Tin) had built it. He also recognized Daw Than and Maung Tun Aung (Maung Tin's son). We did not learn any details of these recognitions; but they have little value as evidence of Maung Naing's having paranormal knowledge, because the persons recognized were close neighbors of Maung Naing's family.

[21]Daw Kyi had been given the nickname of Kalamagyi, which means "big dark girl," because she had a dark complexion. The previous personality in the case of Ma Khin Mar Htoo had also been called Kalamagyi, for the same reason.

Maung Naing's Behavior Related to the Previous Life

Maung Naing's Phobia of Snakes. Maung Naing had a marked phobia of snakes when he was a young child.

Maung Naing's Behavior toward Persons Known to Maung Tin. Maung Naing as a child shunned Daw Than (Maung Tin's wife), because he remembered how (during Maung Tin's life) she would get drunk and curse at him. Despite his repugnance for Daw Than, Maung Naing was not above asking favors of her. Once, when he met her in a bazaar, he said to her: "Mi Than, buy me a shirt," which she did. The use of the word *Mi* instead of the honorific *Daw* was extremely rude for a young child addressing an older woman.

Maung Tin had sponsored the novitiating ceremony of a boy called Maung Aung Sein. As I mentioned, Maung Naing remembered this; and believing that he had some credit from Maung Tin's generosity, he asked U (as he then was) Aung Sein to sponsor *his* novitiating ceremony, which U Aung Sein did.

Other Behavior of Maung Naing Related to the Previous Life. After Maung Tin's death his son, Maung Tun Aung, carried on his father's trade in selling foodstuffs at a roadside stall. Daw Kyi noticed that Maung Naing rarely went to the stall and that when he did so, he became sad.

Daw Kyi and U Tin Maung both remarked that Maung Naing resembled Maung Tin in "temperament and character." Maung Naing was fond of trapping wildcats, as Maung Tin had been. He also showed an unusual skill in carpentry, and Daw Kyi said he was able to do carpentry without being taught.

Maung Naing's Birthmarks

Figure 12-31 shows the birthmarks on the medial side of Maung Naing's left foot as they appeared when he was 11½ years old. They were two linear scar-like areas, slightly depressed below the surrounding skin and having slightly increased pigmentation compared with the surrounding skin. They were each about 1.5 centimeters long and 2 millimeters wide.

U Tin Maung had witnessed the incisions the abbot had made at the sites of Maung Tin's snakebite wounds. He said that Maung Naing's birthmark was at the site of the wounds on Maung Tin.

U San-daw, a practitioner of indigenous medicine, had been closely associated with the abbot of the monastery at Pyaw-ywar since his childhood. He said the abbot had had considerable success in the treatment of snakebites. The abbot regularly incised the patient's wounds. He remembered no details of Maung Tin's case.

Daw Kyi said that she noticed Maung Naing's birthmark on his left foot soon after his birth.

In 1988 Daw Kyi told Daw Hnin Aye that Maung Naing's birthmarks had faded "even when he was very young." I do not understand what she considered "very young," because in 1978 Maung Naing himself (then 11½ years old) showed

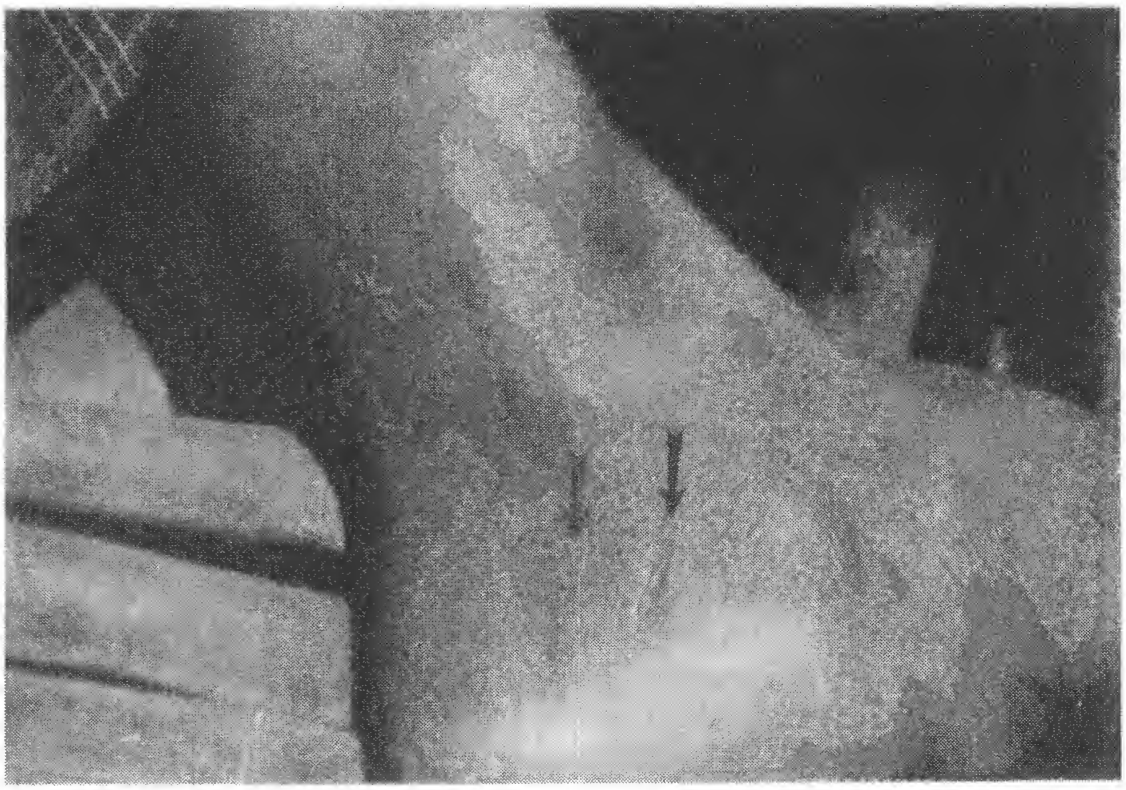


Figure 12-31 Birthmarks on Maung Naing's left foot as they appeared in April 1978, when he was 11½ years old. The birthmarks were two linear areas of scarlike tissue, approximately 1.5 centimeters long and 2 millimeters wide. They were slightly depressed below the surrounding skin and had slightly increased pigment compared with the surrounding skin.

U Win Maung the birthmarks on his left foot, and Daw Kyi was present. In 1990 Daw Hnin Aye examined Maung Naing's left foot and noted there one birthmark that was still distinctly visible. (She did not see the second one that had been visible earlier, as Figure 12-31 shows.)

Maung Naing told Daw Hnin Aye that he had not been living with his mother, Daw Kyi, since his marriage, and so he did not think she had current knowledge of his birthmark.

Maung Naing's Later Development

In 1988 Daw Hnin Aye learned that Maung Naing (who was then 22 years old) had married and already had two children.

Daw Kyi said that he was still somewhat afraid of snakes, but less so than he had been when younger. In 1990 Maung Naing confirmed to Daw Hnin Aye that he was still afraid of snakes and, as a cultivator, took great care to avoid them in his fields and in the compound of his house.

Daw Kyi also said that Maung Naing still avoided Daw Than.

In 1990 Maung Naing told Daw Hnin Aye that he drank alcohol moderately with friends, but not excessively as Maung Tin had.

Comment on Details in the Birthmarks in Cases Involving Snakebite

In the two cases in which we know that the wounds on the previous personality were incised, the birthmarks were two linear areas. In the case in which a lighted cheroot was applied to the area of the snakebite, the birthmark was round.

THE CASE OF RAMOO AND RAJOO SHARMA

Introduction

This is another case of which I have already published a detailed report, and I shall therefore here concentrate attention on the unusual birthmarks of the subjects and their possible correspondence to injuries of the previous personalities in their cases.

Summary of the Case and Its Investigation

Ram Narain Diwedi (Ramoo) and Shesh Narain Diwedi (Rajoo) were twins born in August 1964 in the village of Sham Nagara, District Farrukhabad, Uttar Pradesh, India. Their parents were Ram Swaroop Sharma and his wife, Kapuri Devi. They were Brahmins. Ram Swaroop practiced as an Ayurvedic physician.

When Ramoo and Rajoo were about 3 years old, they began to speak about previous lives they said they had lived in the village of Uncha Larpur, which is about 18 kilometers from Sham Nagara. They said that they had been called Bhimsen and Bhism Pitamah. They described how they had become involved in a quarrel with a neighboring landowner called Jagannath, who had pretended to become reconciled, lured them into a house at his village, and then, with help from other persons, murdered them. Their statements correctly matched events in the lives and deaths of two villagers of Uncha Larpur, twins called Bhimsen and Bhism Pitamah. They had been murdered in April 1964, several months before the twins were born.

I learned about this case in November 1971. Dr. L. P. Mehrotra began investigating it in July 1972, and we worked on it together in October 1972 and March 1973. In the latter month we were able to examine and copy relevant parts of the trial of the persons accused of murdering Bhimsen and Bhism Pitamah. The record included the police report of the initial examination of the bodies and the (much less informative) report of the postmortem examinations of the bodies. In October 1974, Dr. Satwant Pasricha participated in some further interviews. In November 1983, Dr. Pasricha (accompanied by Dr. Nicholas McClean-Rice) obtained information about the twins' further development. (By this time they

were 19 years old.) In 1983 we obtained one item of additional information relevant to their cases that we had not had when I published my first report of their cases in 1975. Dr. Pasricha and Dr. McClean-Rice obtained samples of blood from the twins and a sufficient number of members of their family. This was analyzed at the Regional Transfusion Centre, Sheffield, England. It showed that the twins were dizygotic. (I found this result mildly surprising, because although Ramoo was appreciably taller than Rajoo, I had thought, during the 1970s, that their faces were closely similar.)

The Murder of Bhimsen and Bhism Pitamah

As happens so often in cases of murder in Asian villages, all the eyewitnesses to the crime were either implicated or cowed into silence. Nevertheless, as also often happens, leaks about the murder got back to Uncha Larpur, where they were collected and later told to us, principally by the murdered twins' older brother, Chandra Sen, and another relative, Subedar Tripathi. Their information is probably reliable, even though secondhand, because the murderers, who were acquitted at their trial for lack of evidence, began after a time to talk freely about how they had killed Bhimsen and Bhism Pitamah.

According to our informants, Bhimsen and Bhism Pitamah were persuaded to go to a house in Kurri (a village near Uncha Larpur) on the pretext of settling up a financial matter. While there, they were suddenly seized by an overwhelming number of villagers. These had assembled ostensibly to witness the financial transaction, but actually to assist in the planned murder. Bhism Pitamah managed to escape, but then noticing that Bhimsen was still held captive, he returned to help him (or was perhaps recaptured). The twins were then held down with lathis across their trunks. If several lathis are placed across a person's trunk and held down by men at either end, the victim becomes completely immobilized. A post from a charpoy (Indian cot) was then pressed on the twins' necks until they died of strangulation.

The murderers then thought to dispose of the bodies, but ran out of time for doing this effectively. The murders took place in the middle of the night, and with dawn the murderers would have attracted attention if seen carrying dead bodies about. Accordingly, they put the bodies into a well, where they were not discovered for several days. At some stage they tied the bodies up with ropes, presumably to minimize the space taken by the bodies when they were transported before being hidden. The bodies were found with ropes on them when discovered in the well.

Bhimsen and Bhism Pitamah were last seen alive on April 28, 1964. Their bodies were not found until May 2, and the postmortem examination was not performed until May 4.

The Police Report of the Murder of Bhimsen and Bhism Pitamah. The police noted numerous marks around the bodies, but particularly at the necks, and they concluded that the twins had died of strangulation.

Bhism Pitamah's body was tied with the knees under the chin, but Bhimsen's seems not to have been thus tied, although his legs were bent and tied.

The police report noted on the body of Bhimsen (whose life Ramoo recalled) marks of hemp ropes on one wrist, an armpit, the chest, and the neck. The hands and feet of Bhism Pitamah (whose life Rajoo recalled) were tied with a rope made out of a sari. Also, according to the police report, "the neck was tied with a 'sari' rope." The report on Bhism Pitamah also stated: "There were red marks on the body in several places."

No mention was made of marks on the abdomen of either body, but it was noted that the skin of both bodies had decomposed.

The Report of the Postmortem on Bhimsen and Bhism Pitamah. Between the discovery of the bodies on May 2 and the postmortem examination on May 4, two days of India's hottest season had passed. There was no possibility of refrigeration, and the bodies had badly decomposed by the time the pathologist examined them. He stated that he could not determine a cause of death.

The Birthmarks on Ramoo and Rajoo

Figures 12-32 and 12-33 show the abdomens and lower chests of Ramoo and Rajoo respectively. I took these photographs in October 1972, when the twins were a little more than 8 years old. The birthmarks are not easily distinguishable in my photographs. They consisted of lines of hyperpigmentation running (more or less) horizontally across the abdomen and (in Ramoo) across the lower chest. The lines were approximately 2 millimeters in width.

Ramoo had five such linear marks, the first being just above his umbilicus, and the fifth at the level of his xiphoid process. They were spaced apart irregularly.

I could detect only two such marks on Rajoo. The lower of these was just above his umbilicus (like the lowest one on Ramoo), and the upper one was about 6 centimeters above it.

The two lower marks on Ramoo and both of the marks on Rajoo extended right across the abdomen; the three superior marks on Ramoo extended across only part of his trunk.

Both the twins' mother, Kapuri Devi, and their paternal uncle, Gaya Prasad, said that these marks were present on the twins when they were born. They then appeared as if the twins' bodies had been cut. Ram Swaroop said that he had not noticed the birthmarks, but I found him a poor observer of the twins.

The Later Appearance of the Birthmarks. At their follow-up interviews in 1983, Dr. Pasricha and Dr. McClean-Rice examined and photographed the birthmarks on Ramoo and Rajoo. (As I mentioned, they were then 19 years old.) Ramoo's birthmarks had faded or at least did not appear on the photograph taken; but Rajoo's seemed more prominent than they had been 11 years earlier (Figure 12-34). I cannot tell whether Rajoo's birthmarks had in fact become more prominent or merely appeared so, perhaps because of better lighting or better photography on the part of Dr. McClean-Rice. I have not myself met Ramoo and Rajoo since 1974.

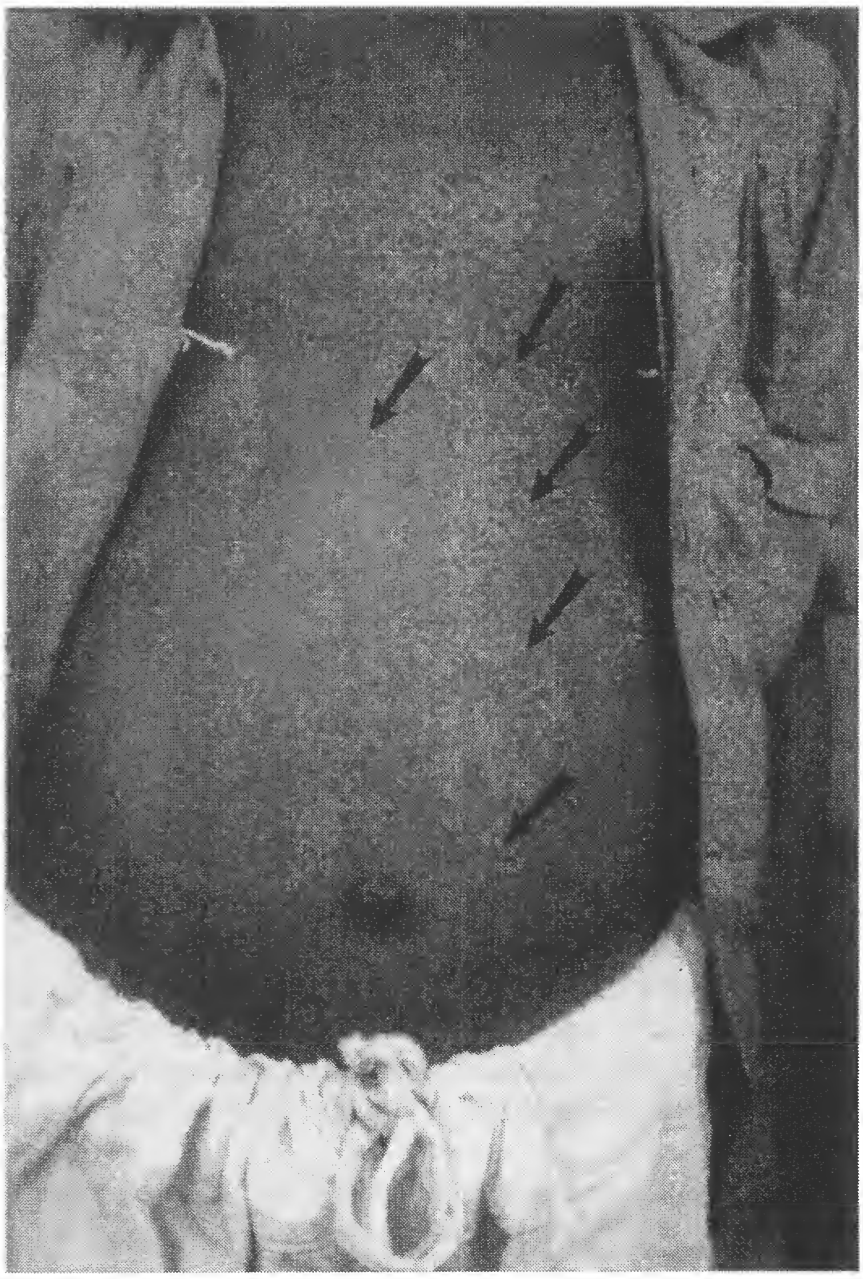


Figure 12-32 Birthmarks on the abdomen of Ramoo as they appeared in October 1972, when he was a little more than 8 years old. A line of hyperpigmentation about 2 millimeters in width can be seen extending across the abdomen just superior to the umbilicus. Four fainter but similar lines extended across part or all of the trunk between the most prominent mark (the lowest one) and the region of the xiphoid process.

Comment

In my 1975 report of the case I suggested that the birthmarks on Ramoo and Rajoo might have corresponded either to marks made by the ropes with which they had been tied (probably after death) or to the lathis that had been

Figure 12-33 Birthmarks on the abdomen of Rajoo as they appeared in October 1972, when he was a little more than 8 years old. One mark was just superior to the umbilicus. Like the marks on Ramoo it was a linear area of hyperpigmentation about 2 millimeters wide extending across the abdomen. Another mark, slanting instead of horizontal, could be faintly seen about 6 centimeters superior to the lower mark.

used to pin them down while they were strangled. I gave equal weight to these two possibilities.

In the course of writing the present report I have again studied the testimony of the police report and that of Chandra Sen, who witnessed the removal of the

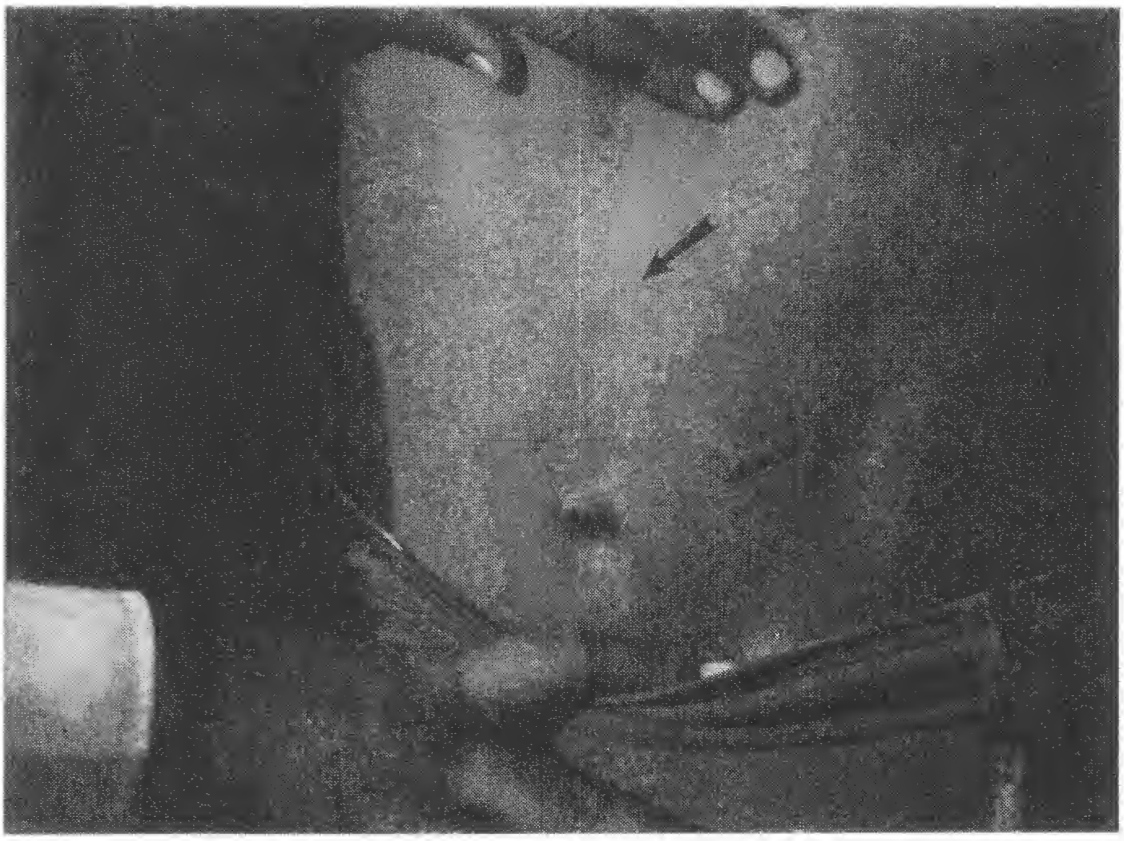


Figure 12-34 Birthmarks on Rajoo as they appeared in November 1983, when he was 19 years old. The birthmarks appeared more prominent than they had been earlier, but this may be only an appearance due to better lighting or better photography.

twins' bodies from the well where they had been hidden. It seems to me now that the twins' birthmarks are much more likely to correspond to the marks made by the lathis that held down Bhimsen and Bhism Pitamah as they were being strangled than to marks made by ropes tied around them after their deaths. Figures 4-24 and 12-35 show Indian villagers holding lathis.

FURTHER CASES ILLUSTRATING DETAILS IN BIRTHMARKS

Several cases to be described in later parts of this work include details of birthmarks and birth defects that deserve attention. In Chapter 18, for example, I will draw attention to details in the birth defect of Semih Tutuşmuş, which seem to me suggestive of the shotgun wounds that killed the man whose life Semih remembered. In Chapter 22 I will describe the two birthmarks that B. B. Saxena said corresponded to gunshot wounds of entry and exit during the life that he remembered. Also, the chapters on birth defects include eight cases for which informants reported a correspondence between birthmarks (or birth

Figure 12-35 Villager of northern India holding a lathi (heavy bamboo pole) of the kind allegedly used to pin down Bhimsen and Bhism Pitamah while they were being strangled.

defects) and impressions made by ropes with which previous personalities had actually or supposedly been tied before being killed.

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13

Discrepancies between Birthmarks and the Evidence of Reportedly Corresponding Wounds

INTRODUCTION

Readers up to this point may have supposed that apart from some occasional errors in details (which I have mentioned in the case reports), I always learned of a satisfactory correspondence between the wounds or other marks on the previous personality and the subject's birthmarks. This is not true, because although I did find close correspondences in the great majority of the cases, in some I did not. I propose in this chapter to discuss these discrepant cases and to offer my, admittedly uncertain, conjectures about how the discrepancies may have arisen.

The postmortem reports (and other medical documents) that my associates and I have obtained free us for the cases in which they apply from relying on the memories of informants about the nature and location of the fatal wounds on the previous personality. Written reports (like oral ones) are no more reliable than the persons making them, and when I have seen a postmortem report that showed signs of being hastily and carelessly written, I have sometimes wanted to discard it. I have not permitted myself to do this; once committed to accepting postmortem reports for some cases we must include them as part of the evidence in every case for which we have one.

In all, my associates and I obtained 62 documents (or summaries of such documents) bearing on the previous personality's wounds and cause of death. Of

these, 56 were medical documents, mostly postmortem reports, but also a few hospital records or physician's notes; 4 were photographs showing the previous personality's relevant lesion; 1 was a newspaper account that gave details of how the previous personality had died; and 1 was a summary of a police report describing the location of wounds. In this count I have included only cases in which I myself was directly involved in the investigation, omitting cases studied only by my associates without my participation or guidance. I myself examined the birthmarks and birth defects of all but 4 of the subjects of this group.

I decided that I would count as a satisfactory correspondence only those cases in which the relevant wound or other mark and the birthmark, projected onto a normal-sized *adult* body, would both be within an area 10 centimeters square. Figure 13-1 shows a human figure assumed to be 1.75 meters tall, which is the height of the 50th centile of 18-year-old American men and 19-year-old British men (Tanner, 1978). The large and small squares on the right chest of the figure represent areas 10 centimeters square and 5 centimeters square. The drawing should assist readers in judging the correspondence in location between the wounds (or other marks) and the related birthmarks and birth defects.

In many cases of this work the pertinent wounds and birthmarks would fall within a much smaller area, such as one 5 centimeters square. This is particularly true of wounds and birthmarks on the head and neck. It seemed best, however, to adopt correspondences within the larger square. Restriction to the smaller square might lead to exclusion of some cases in which a birthmark had shifted in position without the subject's parents having noticed this. (In the two cases with the largest reported shift of the birthmarks after birth [Nasruddin Shah and Bhopal Singh] I accepted the statement of the subject's mother concerning the birthmark's location at the time of the subject's birth.)

A shorter allowed distance would also exclude some correct correspondences between wounds and birthmarks because of imprecision on the part of the pathologist. The task assigned the forensic pathologist is to determine the cause of death. Pathologists who identify a shotgun wound that has penetrated vital organs and blood vessels are usually content to describe it as in the "left chest," "lower back," or (even) "left loin." They usually give the diameter or other dimensions of the wounds, but rarely state their exact distance from anatomical marks.

Table 13-1 summarizes my judgments about the correspondences using the criterion I have mentioned. (The lists include a few subjects with birth *defects* that I describe in later chapters of this work; but most of the subjects of the cases listed had birth*marks*.) I have divided the cases with satisfactory correspondence into those with stronger and those with weaker evidence.

Readers can judge for themselves the evidence in most of the cases that I think have stronger evidence (Category A1), because this work contains reports, usually detailed, of all but five of them.[1]

[1]The subjects of the five cases not described in separate reports of this work are: Susan Eastland, reported elsewhere without reference to the birthmark or medical document; Yogesh Yadav (*continued*)

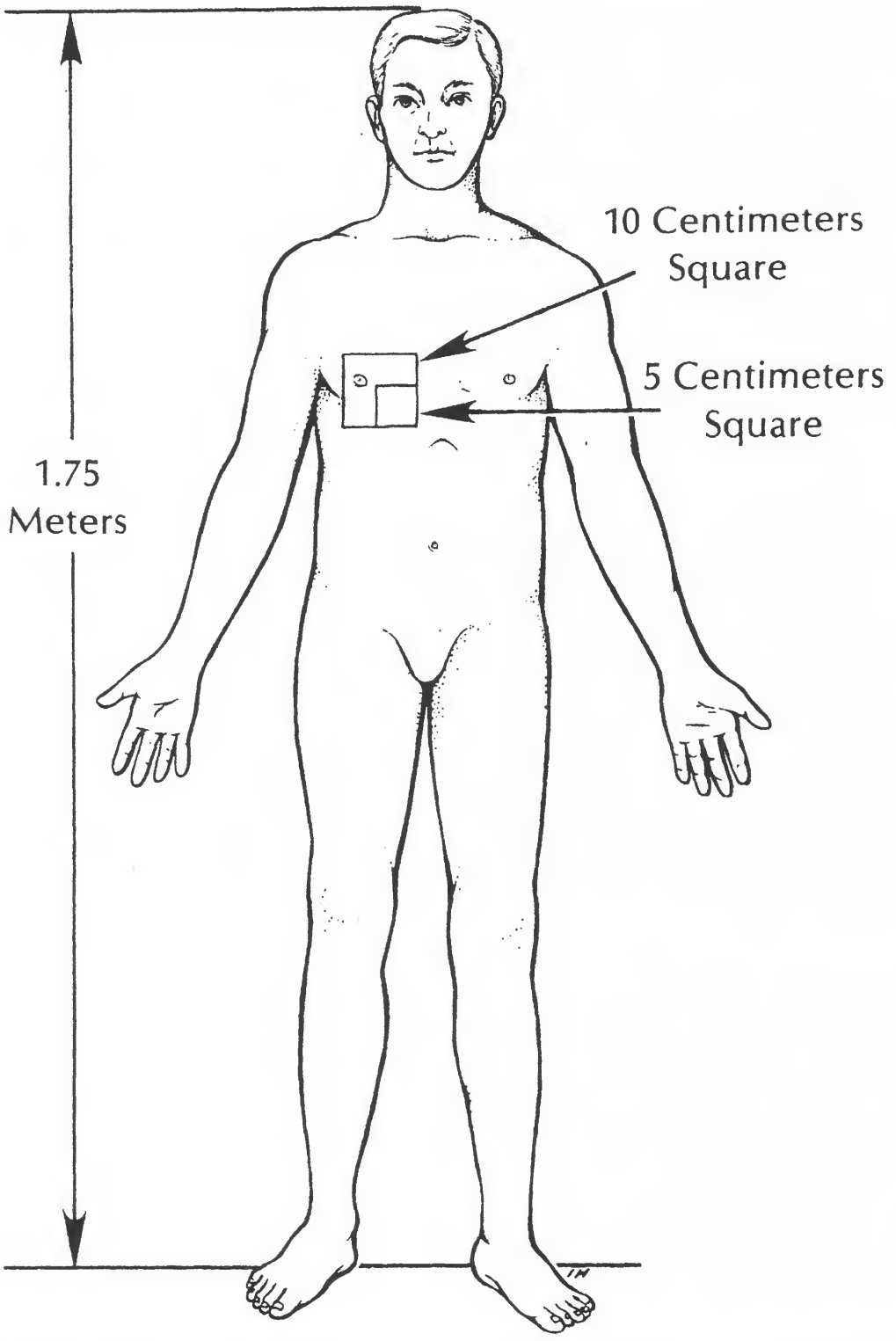

Figure 13-1 Human figure drawing of a person represented as 1.75 meters in height. The squares on the right chest show the proportionate size on such a person of areas 5 centimeters square and 10 centimeters square.

[1](*continued*) (mentioned briefly in Chapter 14); Shiv Shankar Sengar (mentioned in Chapters 13 and 23); Vinod Singh (mentioned briefly in Chapters 14, 22, and 23); and Naripender Singh.

Table 13-1. **Summary of All Cases in Which Medical Documents or Other Printed Evidence Were Obtained that Bear on the Correspondence between Birthmarks, Birth Defects, or Other Lesions on the Subject and Wounds or Other Marks on the Previous Personality**

A. Cases Having Strong Evidence of Correspondence		
A1. Medical document confirmed correspondence between wound and birthmark or birth defect Subjects examined by I.S. (Reports of 21 of these cases are included in this work)	26	
A2. Medical document confirmed correspondence between wound and birth defect or lesion Subjects' conditions reported by informants, but subjects not examined by I.S.	3	
A3. Photograph or other printed source showed or confirmed lesion in previous personality	4	
		33
B. Additional Instances of Correspondences with Weaker Evidence		
B1. Medical document confirmed correspondence between wound and birthmark, but birthmark observed by investigators only *after* the medical document had been studied	3	
B2. Medical document confirmed correspondence between wound and birthmark reported by informants, but birthmark had faded before the investigation	5	
B3. Medical document stated previous personality died from a disease for which the surgical operation reported by informants (and corresponding to a birthmark) was a common treatment	1	
B4. Police report summarized location of wounds and confirmed their correspondence to subject's birth defects (Report not studied by I.S.; information obtained from another investigator's unpublished report of the case)	1	
		10
C. Inconclusive or Ambiguous Cases		
C1. Complete autopsy infeasible because body had decomposed	1	
C2. Postmortem report lacking in detail and partly illegible	1	
C3. Doubts about authenticity of case	1	
C4. Anomalous dates of death and birth	1	
C5. Indicated possible birthmarks not noted by parents until subject was 2 years old or older	5	
C6. No birthmark visible at time of investigation and/or no definite statement by informants about its location before fading	3	
C7. Birthmark on opposite side of orbit from wound noted in post-mortem report	1	
		13
D. Major Discrepancies between Medical Document and Principal Indicated Birthmarks (Cases described in text)	6	
		6
Total		62

Among the cases with weaker evidence (Category B), we identified three of the relevant birthmarks only after we had read the medical reports and returned to examine the subject again. In one instance, I observed what I believe to be a relevant birthmark—a round hyperpigmented macule—only when I examined a photograph of the subject's chest. In a second case of this group Reşat Bayer and I had seen the relevant birthmark (on the subject's abdomen) when we first examined him, but we did not single it out because there were other marks on the abdomen; and we thought they too were birthmarks instead of realizing that they were, as I now believe, scars of furuncles. The third case of this group is that of Bhopal Singh, which I described in Chapter 11. In this case, Dr. Satwant Pasricha and I, contrary to our usual practice, obtained a copy of the postmortem report after one of our associates had made a preliminary study of the case but before we ourselves had examined Bhopal's birthmarks. I do not believe that our reading of the postmortem report influenced our judgment about the location of Bhopal's birthmarks; but some readers may think otherwise, and I have classified the case in Category B1.

Among the five cases in which the birthmark had faded before we began our investigation, in three cases I had made a sketch (before I saw the medical record) of where the informants said the birthmark had been. In the other two cases the birthmark had been on the front of the neck and at the top of the head, locations where informants seem less likely to make mistakes about location than they are when indicating places on the trunk. I present in this chapter a brief summary of one case (Semihe Atasoy) from Category B2 in which the birthmarks had faded by the time we investigated the case.

Category C of Table 13-1 includes a heterogeneous group of 13 cases that had doubtful features so that I did not think it correct to force them into another category. I have listed in the table the divers reasons for regarding them as ambiguous or unclassifiable, and I present (also in this chapter) a summary of two cases (Rajani Sukla and Vasantha Gunasekera) of this group.

For the purposes of this chapter the most important cases are the six in Category D of Table 13-1, and I give in this chapter reports of all these cases. I shall omit some of their details in order to concentrate on the birthmarks and postmortem reports.

Each of these six cases included the usual features of cases suggestive of reincarnation: The subject made verified and correct statements about the previous personality, was credited with recognizing persons and places familiar to that personality, and showed behavior appropriate for him or her. Only the birthmark (or the major birthmark, if there was more than one) was discordant in its lack of correspondence with a wound recorded in the medical document.

In each of these six cases I instigated or strongly encouraged the search for the relevant postmortem reports. This means that up to the time of studying the reports I considered satisfactory the correspondence between the informants'

memories[2] about the wounds on the previous personality and the marks on the subject. Without the postmortem reports I would have been misled in these cases, and I have added comments about the mistakes I made in the hope that future investigators will avoid them.

For four of the six cases I have also added comments about the accuracy of the informants' memories concerning the location of the relevant wounds, this accuracy being tested against the postmortem reports.

In two cases for which we obtained no medical documents informants on the subject's side of a case showed us birthmarks that they believed corresponded to wounds for which the family of the previous personality provided doubtful or no verification. I describe these two cases (Ram Tirath Sharma and Mira Devi Sharma) after the case reports of cases having discrepancies between birthmarks and medical documents.

After these two additional case reports I review informants' errors in remembering wounds on deceased persons and discuss the important contribution that medical documents make in the investigation of these cases.

CASE REPORTS

THE CASE OF SEMIHE ATASOY

Introduction

The sites of two birthmarks that the subject's mother said had been present when she was born (although they had since faded) corresponded to the sites of two wounds on the previous personality that had been noted in a postmortem report. Although I thought that I could detect faint residues of these birthmarks, neither appeared on photographs that I took. I have accordingly classified this case in Category B2 of Table 13-1.

Summary of the Case and Its Investigation

Semihe Atasoy was born in Harbiye, Antakya, Turkey, on February 25, 1963. Her parents were Maruf Atasoy and his wife, Hamame. They were Alevis. Maruf was a grocer and also a sheikh.

Semihe had a birthmark on her chest near the midline and another on her back. I do not believe that her parents attached any importance to these birthmarks until Semihe, when she became able to speak, began to describe events in a previ-

[2]In two cases (Brijendra Singh and Pappu Tiwari) we obtained no description of wounds from informants, and so these cases provided no opportunity for comparing the memories of informants with the wounds reported in medical documents.

ous life. She was then about 2½ years old. She said that in the previous life her husband had killed her. He had first fired a bullet that hit her in the left arm, and then another bullet that hit her in the chest.

I have not noted whether Semihe stated the name of the woman whose life she was claiming to remember. What she said about the death of that person, however, coincided with the murder of a woman of Harbiye called Nesime Doğruel. On July 27, 1960, her husband, drunk one evening, fired his gun at her. She died almost immediately. Nesime was about 35 years old when she died, and she left two young children.

The two families concerned in this case had some slight acquaintance. They might exchange a visit at some important holiday, such as that of Şeker Bayramı, the feast which comes at the end of Ramadan. Otherwise, they had no social relations. Both of Semihe's parents said that they had not learned of Nesime's murder until Semihe began to speak about it. I find this somewhat puzzling; but Harbiye is a small town, and as the Atasoys lived outside the town, they might not have heard of a murder in the center. (They might also have been away at the time of the murder, although I did not ask about this possibility.)

Maruf Atasoy was reluctant to have Semihe meet Nesime's family, and the two families did not meet—at least in connection with the case—until Semihe was about 10 years old. At that time two of Nesime's brothers, Ahmet and Salih Doğruel, came to visit her. (Nesime had married a cousin; hence her husband's name and her brothers' names are the same.) Salih later told Reşat Bayer and me that he had heard rumors to the effect that Nesime had been reborn as Semihe soon after Semihe's birth. The belief rested on the correspondence between the wounds Nesime was known to have received and the birthmarks on Semihe's chest and back. The Doğruel brothers did not pursue the matter then either, and I did not learn what finally led them to go to visit Semihe. When they did go to the Atasoys' house, Semihe recognized them both and called them by their names.

A few months later Semihe returned the visit and went to the Doğruel family. Salih Doğruel told us that she had pointed out the room where Nesime's father had lived and the room where Nesime had slept with her husband. She did not, however, recognize everything that should have been familiar to Nesime.

Maruf Atasoy told us that after Nesime's husband, Hasan Doğruel, had been released from prison, Semihe recognized him on the street in Harbiye. She was walking with her father one day when she suddenly hid behind him, saying "Look! There is my husband who killed me!" Maruf himself did not know Hasan Doğruel at the time. Semihe was about 12 years old when this episode occurred.

Reşat Bayer and I learned of this case in March 1977 when we were in Antakya for the investigation of other cases. We visited the Atasoy family first on March 27, 1977. We interviewed Semihe and both of her parents. Semihe said that she still remembered the previous life. We learned from Hamame that Semihe had

had a birthmark near the midline of her chest and one on her back. (Semihe had also mentioned to us that she had a birthmark on her chest.) Semihe was at this time a maiden of 14, and her father did not wish us to examine the birthmark on her chest. We left the Atasoys and went to meet Salih Doğruel, Nesime's brother. He was muhtar (headman) of a quarter of Harbiye, and we met him at his home.

Semihe's Birthmarks

On the following day, March 28, 1977, we were able to obtain a copy of the postmortem examination of Nesime Doğruel. We returned to the Atasoys, this time accompanied by a female physician, Dr. Günül Atlı. Hamame Atasoy assured us that both Semihe's principal birthmarks had completely faded. She indicated on a human figure drawing where the birthmarks had been (Figure 13-2). I thought that perhaps the birthmarks had not faded, and with Dr. Atlı's help we persuaded Semihe and her mother to let us examine her for ourselves. I thought that I could see two faint birthmarks close to the sites indicated by Hamame Atasoy: on the front of Semihe's chest near the midline at the lower end of the sternum and on her back (Figure 13-3). I endeavored to photograph these but nothing distinguishable appeared on my prints. On a figure of the human body that I was then using I made marks to indicate where I thought I had seen these faint birthmarks. These sites were satisfactorily close to the places on Semihe's chest and back that Hamame had indicated as the locations where the birthmarks had been before they had, in her opinion, faded.

Hamame Atasoy said that Semihe had had a birthmark on her left elbow. I examined Semihe there and thought I saw a faint birthmark, but this also did not come out on the photographs that I took. (I did not examine her right elbow.)

The Report of the Postmortem on Nesime Doğruel

The postmortem report on Nesime Doğruel stated that she had four gunshot wounds in the chest:

1. One at the lateral side of the left breast;
2. One at the medial side of the left breast;
3., 4. Two in the lower part of the lateral side of the right breast.

The pathologist also noted that three of the four bullets had exited at the back, two under the left scapula and one under the right scapula. He also noted some ecchymosis of the right elbow.

Further examination of the body showed that there had been no injuries of the head or abdomen. When the chest was opened, it was found that there had been extensive bleeding and damage to the lungs. Death was attributed to these conditions. The heart and great vessels had not been wounded.

Comment. Dr. Kemal Elbirlik, who translated relevant parts of the postmortem report for me, remarked that it showed signs of carelessness and lacked

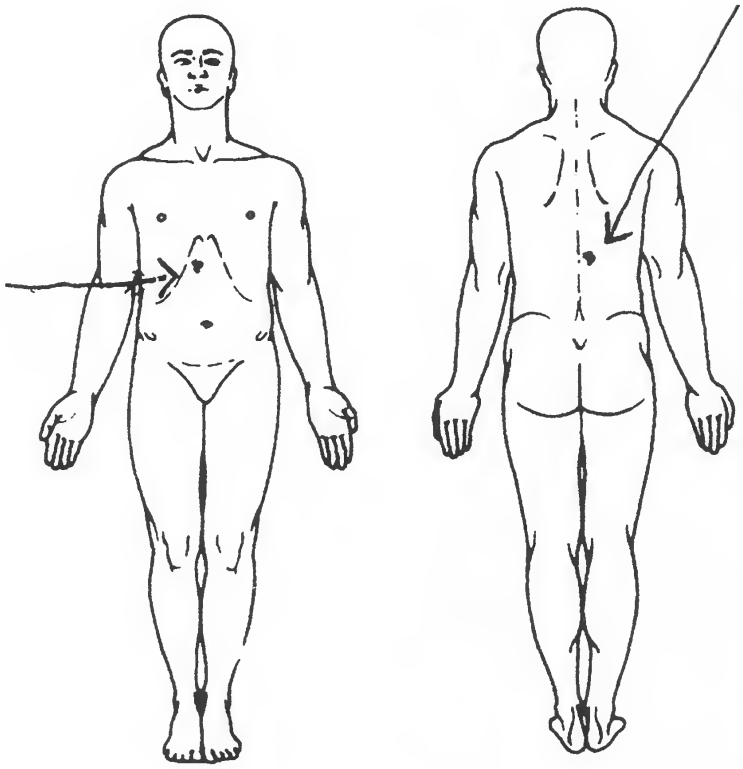

Figure 13-2 The arrows point to places where Hamame Atasoy indicated birthmarks had been present when Semihe was born; she believed they had since faded.

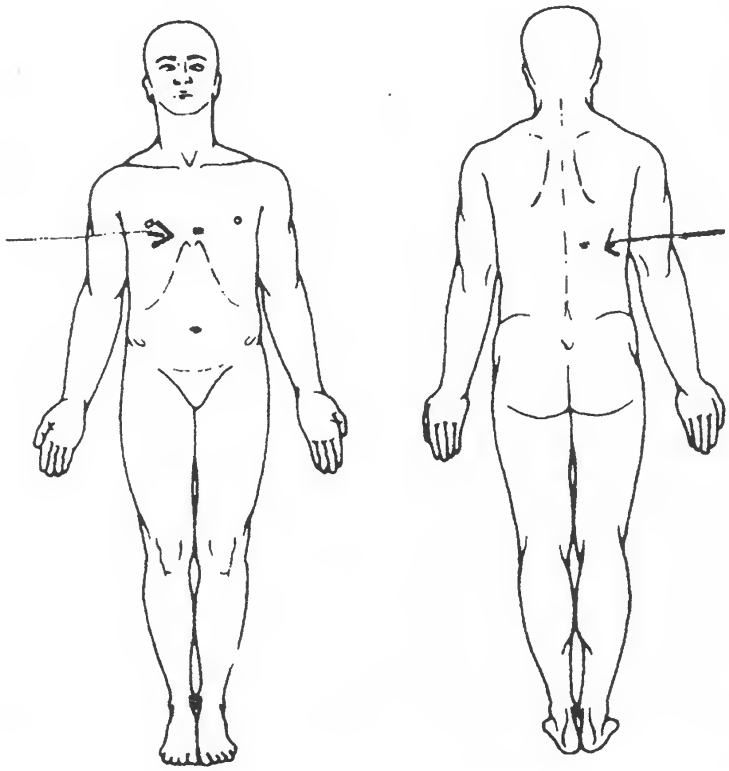

Figure 13-3 The arrows point to places where I discerned what appeared to be faint birthmarks (hyperpigmented macules).

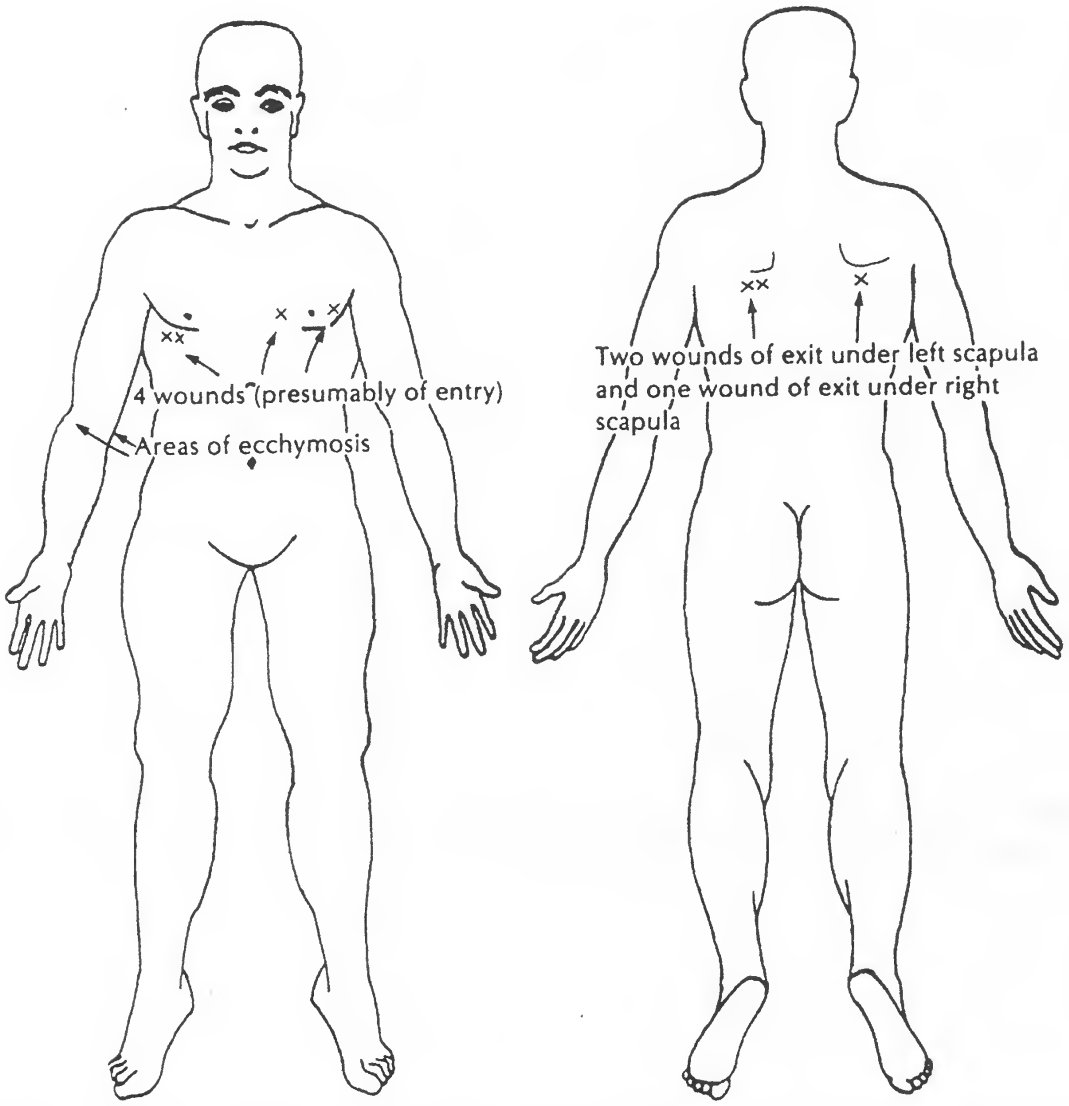
4 wounds (presumably of entry)
Areas of ecchymosis
Two wounds of exit under left scapula and one wound of exit under right scapula

Figure 13-4 The crosses were placed by Dr. Kemal Elbirlik from indications of the wounds of entry and exit noted in the postmortem on Nesime Doğruel.

professionalism. We were both surprised that, given the location of the wound of the left chest near the sternum, no large blood vessel had been hit by the bullet making that wound.

Nevertheless, the pathologist's indications of the external wounds permitted Dr. Elbirlik to place marks (crosses) on a human figure drawing to indicate the location of the external wounds the report described (Figure 13-4). The mark that he placed for wound Number 2 was at the lower end and just to the left of the sternum, over the heart. It corresponded closely—between 5 and 10 centimeters I judge—with the place indicated by Hamame, where the birthmark on Semihe's chest had been and where I thought I could detect a faint residue of that birthmark.

The birthmark on Semihe's back had a less exact correspondence to one of the wounds noted by the pathologist on Nesime's back. One of these wounds

was below the scapula to the right of the midline. The birthmark on the back that Hamame indicated (and that I could faintly discern) was to the right of the midline, but somewhat lower than the place indicated for the wound on Nesime. The correspondence would be satisfactory if we make allowance for some shifting in the position of the birthmark as Semihe grew. (I must note, however, that I failed to ask whether Hamame had observed any shift in this birthmark's location.)

Hamame stated that Semihe had had a birthmark on her left elbow, and I thought I saw a faint mark there, although this did not appear on my photographs. The pathologist noted no wound on Nesime's *left* elbow, but ecchymosis on her *right* elbow. The bullet producing this lesion must have grazed the elbow without penetrating the skin.

Comment on the Greater Number of Wounds than of Birthmarks

Semihe's case is one of several cases in which the number of wounds on the previous personality exceeded the number of birthmarks on the subject. The pathologist noted seven gunshot wounds on Nesime (four on her chest and three on her back), but Semihe had only two birthmarks, one on her chest and one on her back. This seems to me an important discrepancy; in Chapter 14 I give a list of cases having this feature (Table 14-6) and offer a possible explanation for it.

I think it important that the single birthmark on Semihe's chest corresponded to the wound of a bullet that produced severe hemorrhage in a lung with consequent loss of consciousness. Nesime may have already been unconscious when her husband fired three other shots into her body.

It is relevant also that Semihe remembered only that Nesime's husband had first fired a shot that hit her in the elbow and then one that hit her in the chest. She had no memory of the other three shots.

THE CASE OF RAJANI SUKLA

Introduction

This case is illustrative of those I placed in Category C of Table 13-1. The correspondence between a wound recorded in the postmortem report and the birthmark was close and well within the limit of distance that I have adopted. The birthmark, however, was at the medial end of the left orbit whereas the postmortem report located a fracture at the lateral side of the same orbit.

I am not satisfied with our investigation of this case; we did not interview several potentially important informants. Nevertheless, we have sufficient data for a comparison between the subject's birthmark and a wound identified in the postmortem report.

Summary of the Case and Its Investigation

Rajani Sukla was born in Kanpur, Uttar Pradesh, India, on August 8, 1972. Her parents were Vishnu Kumar Sukla and his wife, Prem Lata. Rajani was their fifth child. Vishnu Kumar Sukla was a minor government employee.

When Rajani was born, a nurse who assisted in her delivery noticed a prominent birthmark above Rajani's left eye and said to her mother: "Your Guddi has come back." *Guddi* is a pet name often given to young girls in northern India, and the nurse meant to say that the newborn baby was the reincarnation of her parents' deceased daughter, Dev Prabha.

Dev Prabha was born, also in Kanpur, on December 1, 1967. She was her parents' third child and second daughter. When Dev Prabha was just under 4 years old, she was killed in a road accident on October 11, 1970. She was riding with her brother on the front of his bicycle while another child was on the back. A truck driver suddenly opened the door of his stationary truck causing Dev Prabha's brother to swerve and lose control of the bicycle. Dev Prabha was thrown onto the ground. Later, Rajani's mother thought the truck was actually moving at the time and had run over Dev Prabha, but we have not verified this. Dev Prabha died immediately.

After Dev Prabha's death, Prem Lata used to dream of her. In the dreams, Dev Prabha tried to console her mother, saying: "Don't cry. I will come back."

Prem Lata became pregnant again, but did not wish to have another child and instead had an abortion. After the abortion, she again dreamed of Dev Prabha, who reproached her with injustice in not "letting me in."[3] Prem Lata then became pregnant again and had another abortion. Then, for the third time she became pregnant. This time she decided to let the pregnancy continue, and Rajani was born.

When Rajani was able to speak, she made some statements indicating memories of Dev Prabha's life. One of her more impressive utterances occurred when her older brother, Krishan, who was younger than Dev Prabha, addressed her as if she were younger. Rajani said to him: "Call me Didi [meaning "older sister"]. I am 4 years older than you."[4]

A report of this case appeared in October 1978 in the Hindi magazine *Manohar Kahaniyan*, from which Dr. Satwant Pasricha learned of it. She interviewed Prem Lata in December 1979. She also met Rajani and photographed her birthmark. In December 1980 Dr. Pasricha examined and copied the report of the postmortem examination of Dev Prabha. In February 1983 she and I (accompanied by Dr. Nicholas McClean-Rice) had a second interview with Prem Lata. We also talked a little with Rajani, who by this time had no memories of the previous life. We did not interview Rajani's father. I have no note that explains this, but he

[3]In the case of Huriye Bugay, the previous personality seemed to communicate through a medium and forbade the subject's mother—who was then pregnant—to proceed with an abortion she was then considering.

[4]Rajani's arithmetic was somewhat off here. Krishan (whose exact age we did not learn) was born before the death of Dev Prabha. Thus she (Dev Prabha) might have been 3 years older than Krishan, but not 4 years older.

was not at home when we met Rajani and her mother in February 1983. We also failed to interview two other potentially valuable informants: Dev Prabha's older brother, who was riding the bicycle when she was killed, and the nurse who saw Dev Prabha's dead body and assisted in Rajani's delivery.

Prem Lata's Memory of the Wounds on Dev Prabha

Prem Lata had been out of Kanpur on the day Dev Prabha was killed. She returned the following day and saw her daughter's dead body. In 1983 she at first remembered that Dev Prabha's *right* eye had been damaged and that brain tissue had come out. When we asked her whether she could be sure about the side of the injury, she said that she could not. She was crying, she said, and did not carefully observe where the injuries were.

Prem Lata gave us a secondhand report from the nurse who helped in Rajani's delivery and who had also seen Dev Prabha's body. She said that Rajani's birthmark had been at the same place as the wound on Dev Prabha.

Rajani's Birthmark

Figure 13-5 shows the birthmark on Rajani's forehead above the medial end of the left orbit. In 1983 it consisted of a linear area of slightly hyperpigmented, slightly puckered tissue that extended from the hairline to the medial end of the left eyebrow. A line of hypopigmentation was parallel to the line of hyperpigmentation. The abnormal area was about 4-5 millimeters wide and 5-6 centimeters long and extended from the hairline almost to the eyebrow.

In 1983 Rajani's mother at first said that the birthmark had not moved since Rajani's birth; but later in the interview she noted that some lateral movement had occurred.

She had noticed no other birthmarks on Rajani, such as at the top of the head. It seems that Rajani had considerable hair when born and this may have covered a birthmark, if there had been one.

The Report of the Postmortem on Dev Prabha

The postmortem report recorded the following injuries.

1. Lacerated and crushed injury 4 inches by 3 inches and brain deep on the right side of the head. Brain matter coming out and skull bones on right side fractured.
2. Lacerated wound 1 inch by ½ inch and bone deep at outer side of left orbit. Left eye is pushed inside. Fracture of left orbit at outer side.
3. Lacerated wound ½ inch by ¼ inch and muscle deep on left lower lip. Teeth on left side broken. Tongue protruding out.
4. Contusion 2 inches by ½ inch on nose.

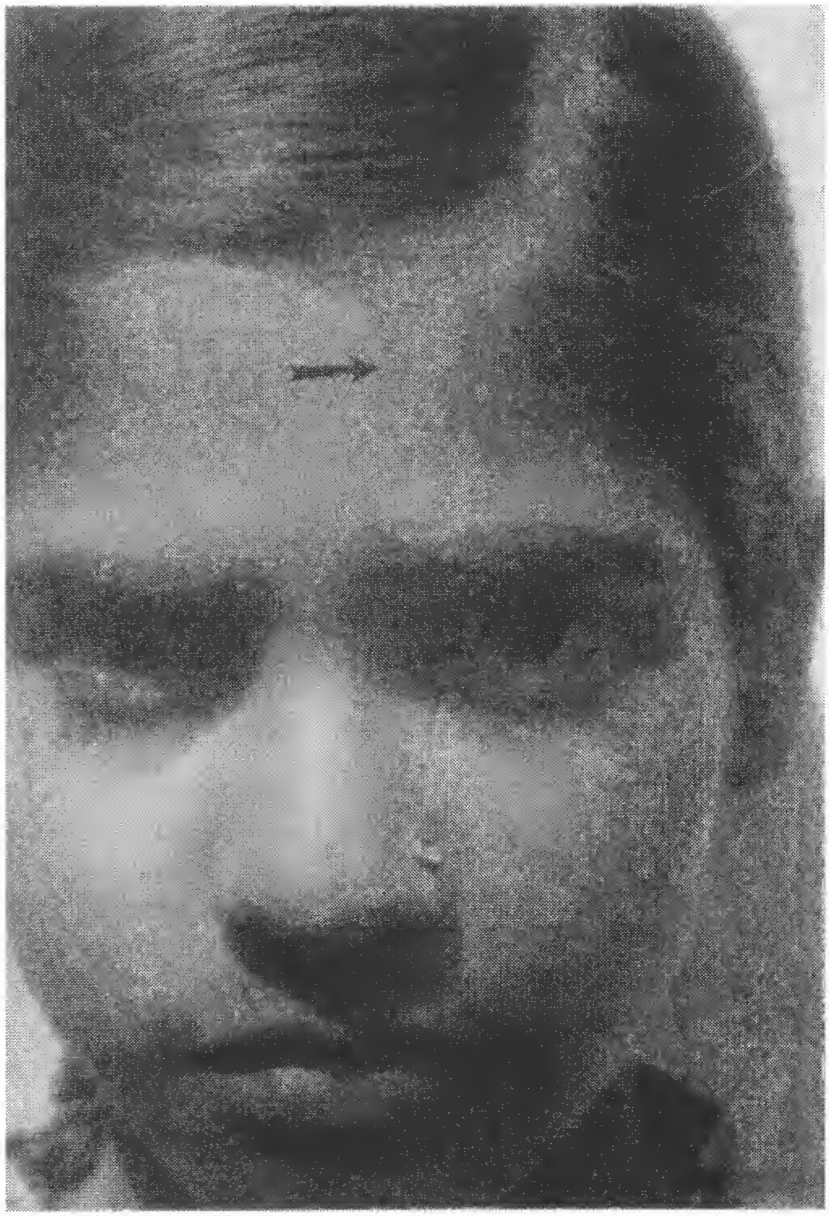

Figure 13-5 Birthmark on the forehead of Rajani Sukla as it appeared in February 1983, when she was 10½ years old. The birthmark consisted of a linear area of hyperpigmentation with a somewhat puckered surface extending from the hairline to the medial end of the left eyebrow. A linear area of decreased pigmentation was present along the lateral side of the birthmark. The abnormal area was about 4-5 millimeters wide and 5-6 centimeters long.

Comment

In the absence of an eyewitness account of the accident in which Dev Prabha was killed we can only conjecture about how she died. I think, however, that important wounds at both the *left* orbit and the *right* cranium could only have occurred if Dev Prabha had received two separate injuries. If Dev Prabha had

pitched forward off the bicycle, the left side of her face might have struck the pavement first, and this would account for the fracture to the left orbit and the injuries to the nose and left lower lip. It would not, however, explain the injury to the right side of the cranium (injury Number 1 of the postmortem report); and this injury gives some support to Prem Lata's belief that the truck was moving and struck or ran over Dev Prabha after she fell. The same difficulty would arise if the right side of Dev Prabha's head struck the pavement first. This would explain the injury on that side of her head, but not the injuries on the left side.

The birthmark did not have a precise correspondence with any wound noted in the postmortem report. It may nevertheless correspond to the site on Dev Prabha where her head first touched the pavement. If this is a correct interpretation, we have parallel cases in those of Wilfred Meares, Maung Zaw Thein Lwin, and Dellâl Beyaz. Although the previous personalities in their cases received other wounds when they fell, their birthmarks corresponded to the places on the head where the body *first* met resistance from the hard surface on which it fell.

THE CASE OF VASANTHA GUNASEKERA

Introduction

This is another of the cases that I placed in Category C of Table 13-1. The subject's parents did not notice any marks on him until he was 4 years old, or perhaps even older, and had begun to speak about the previous life.

Summary of the Case and Its Investigation

Vasantha Gunasekera was born in Polgahawela, Sri Lanka, on July 8, 1972. His parents were W. G. Gunasekera and his wife, R.A.M. Menike. They were Sinhalese Buddhists. Vasantha's father was a rice farmer, and the family lived in the village of Weligamuwa, in the Kegalle District.

Vasantha's parents noticed no birthmarks on him at or soon after his birth. When Vasantha was about 2 years old, he began to speak about a previous life. He noticed his mother getting ready to take a bag of paddy to the mill, carrying it on her head. He said: "Our mother there did not carry paddy on her head; it was taken in our car." After this, Vasantha stated numerous details about the life and death of a boy who had been shot and killed in a nearby village. He named the village. He particularly spoke of "Rani Akka," with whom, he said, he had gone to school. (*Akka* means "older sister" in Sinhalese.)

Vasantha's statements were correct for a boy named Shelton Weerasinghe, who had lived at a place called Kaddawattiya, about 3 kilometers from Weligamuwa. On April 9, 1971, he had been in the house with his father when a group of persons came to the house and opened fire on the family, who were

inside the house. (The assailants appear to have been political rivals of the Weerasinghes, and they had decided to settle accounts under cover of the insurgency that occurred in April 1971 and, for a time, seriously disrupted Sri Lanka.)

Shelton was hit by a bullet in the chest and died almost immediately. (He was about 7½ years old.) His father was badly wounded and had to have one of his legs amputated. Another child, a friend of the family, was wounded and died 12 days after the shooting. Shelton's father recovered and died in 1978.

Shelton Weerasinghe's father, Muni Sirisena, made a deposition at the trial of the persons who had fired on him and his family. In his deposition he said that Shelton had been hit by a bullet "in the chest." He did not give a further localization of the wound. Nearly a decade later, when interviewed by us, Shelton's mother put her hand on the center of her chest to indicate to us where the bullet had struck Shelton. She said that it had exited at his back.

The two families knew about each other, and some members of one family might have casually met members of the other family; but they belonged to different castes and had no social relationships.

Vasantha's parents knew about Shelton's death, and they knew that some of Vasantha's statements were correct for Shelton's life. W. G. Gunasekera had no interest, however, in verifying the statements that he did not already know to be correct, and he did not wish Vasantha to meet Shelton's family; he was afraid that Vasantha would develop divided loyalties.

Vasantha asked to go to the previous family. He said that he wanted to see his mother and father. Menike told him: "I am your mother." To this, he replied: "Don't you know there is a previous life?" At night before going to sleep he would sometimes cry and beseech his family to take him to the previous family.

Word of Vasantha's statements reached Shelton's family. When Vasantha was about 7½ years old (in late 1979), Shelton's older sister Rani happened to come to Weligamuwa, and, remembering Vasantha's claimed memories, she sent a message to Menike asking if she could meet Vasantha. Menike agreed, and Rani came to the house along with two other girls. In August 1980 Menike narrated to Godwin Samararatne the conversation that took place between Vasantha and Rani:

> Rani: Can you recognize me?
> Vasantha (after looking intently at Rani for about 15 minutes): You are Rani Akka. You have changed a lot now. You have grown bigger.
> Rani: Can you remember what you ate that evening? [This referred to the day of Shelton's death.]
> Vasantha: Manioc. [Correct]

Upon hearing the last reply, Rani broke into tears. The next day Shelton's mother came to Weligamuwa, and Vasantha recognized her also. She and Rani became convinced that Vasantha was Shelton reborn. A particularly impressive detail emerged when Vasantha said that he (as Shelton) had written the license number of the family car on a slate, which Shelton had in fact done.

Tissa Jayawardene learned of this case in August 1980 (through a newspaper report). He visited Vasantha's family, made notes of essential names and addresses, and photographed two marks on Vasantha's chest and back, which by this time his parents had identified as birthmarks.

In August 1980 Godwin Samararatne interviewed Vasantha's mother and recorded a long statement from Vasantha himself. He also interviewed informants for Shelton's side of the case, most notably his older sister Rani.

In October 1982 I entered the investigation, and we added Vasantha's father and Shelton's mother to the list of persons interviewed.

Observations by Vasantha's Parents of the Marks on His Chest and Back

Vasantha's parents did not notice any mark on his chest until he himself drew their attention to one. He had been talking about the previous life for at least 2 years when Vasantha's father one day expressed skepticism about his claims. Vasantha then pointed toward his chest and said: "Here is proof." (As he was still a young child, I am not claiming that these were his exact words, but this is the translation Godwin Samararatne gave me.) This supposes that Vasantha had been examining his chest by himself. His parents now looked at his chest and identified the round mark shown in Figure 13-6. They examined his back and found a mark there that they thought corresponded to a wound of exit.

Vasantha's parents disagreed about his age when they first saw what they took to be birthmarks related to the previous life. His father thought they had noticed them when Vasantha was about 4 years old, but his mother dated their first observation later, saying Vasantha was 7 or even 8 years old. Shelton's sister, Rani, said that they had been noticed at the time she first met Vasantha, and he was 7 then.

The Marks on Vasantha's Chest and Back

Figure 13-6 shows the mark on Vasantha's right upper chest as it appeared in 1980, when he was 8 years old. The mark was an approximately round area of hypopigmentation about 1.5 centimeters in diameter. It was about 3 centimeters superior and medial to the right nipple. Vasantha's family thought this mark corresponded to the bullet wound of entry on Shelton.

Figure 13-7 shows the mark on Vasantha's right upper back, which his family thought corresponded to the bullet wound of exit. This mark was an irregular area of slightly depressed, puckered tissue, measuring about 1 centimeter in length and about 6-7 millimeters at its greatest width. It may have been the scar of a healed furuncle.

The Report of the Postmortem on Shelton Weerasinghe

During April 1971 the police and army in Sri Lanka were so occupied with the insurgency that they had little time to inquire into ordinary private

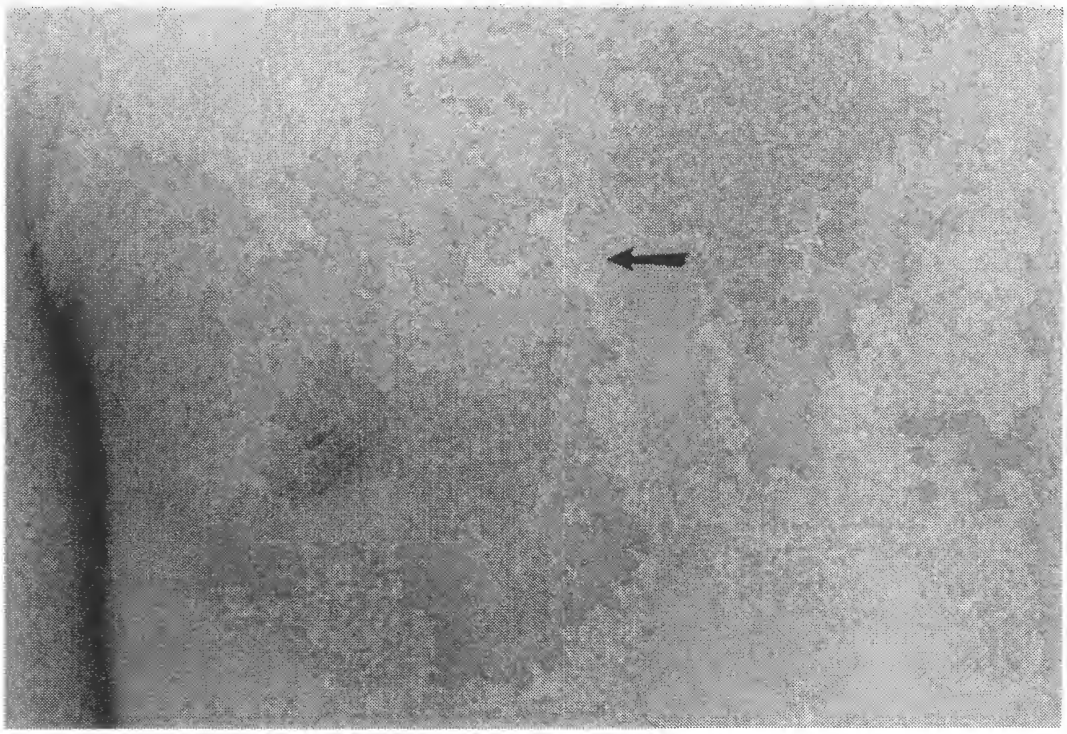

Figure 13-6 Mark on the upper right chest of Vasantha Gunasekera as it appeared in 1980, when he was 8 years old. The mark was a roundish area of hypopigmentation, approximately 1.5 centimeters in diameter.

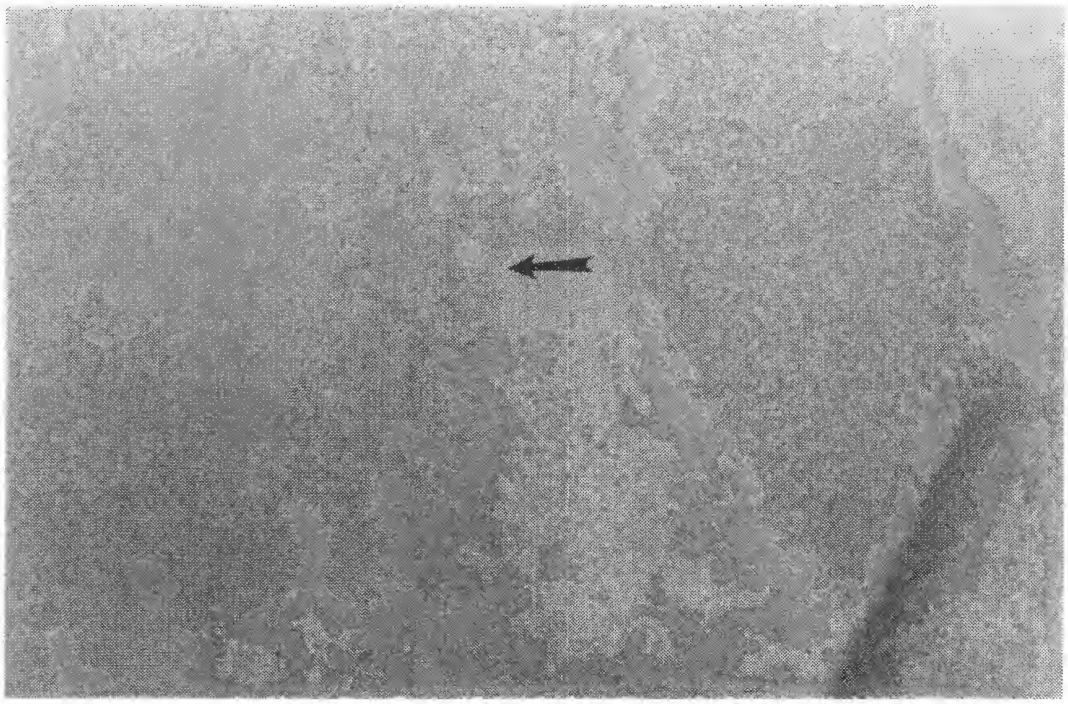

Figure 13-7 Mark on the right upper back of Vasantha Gunasekera as it appeared in 1980, when he was 8 years old. The mark was a slightly depressed, puckered area of irregular shape measuring about 1 centimeter by 6-7 millimeters.

murders taking place during the general confusion that the rebellion produced. Under these circumstances, Shelton's body was buried and then, 3 months later, in June 1971, was exhumed for a postmortem examination. By this time suspects in the shooting had been arrested and indicted. It was necessary to know what had caused Shelton's death. Through the kindness of the High Court Judge at Kandy we obtained a copy of the postmortem report embedded in the trial documents.

Shelton's body had undergone some decomposition, but the pathologist was able to identify two gunshot wounds, as follows:

1. There was a lacerated wound 2 inches long—1 inch broad on the left side of the chest around the nipple. A margin colored black was apparent around the wound.
2. There was a lacerated wound one inch in length and breadth behind the vertebral column a little toward the left, close to the 5th chest [thoracic] vertebra.

The pathologist also noted that the pericardium and the heart were "torn." He concluded that "death was caused by wounding the heart with a firearm."

Comment on the Mistake in Identifying the Marks on Vasantha

This case illustrates the mistake that can be avoided by strictly following the rule of not accepting as a *birth*mark any mark not noticed at birth or within a few weeks of birth. This is the rule to which I have in general firmly adhered. Yet even this case has not prevented me from making occasional exceptions to the rule, and this work contains a few instances in which I have accepted as congenital a mark that adults did not notice within the time limit on which I usually insist. I placed two such cases (Tali Sowaid and Ma Choe Hnin Htet) in Category A1 of Table 13-1, and I think readers of the reports of their cases will understand why I relaxed the rule for these cases. A third case, that of Punkaj Chauhan, has some doubtful features, and I placed it in Category C. (I describe its main features in Chapter 14.)

In the present case I was initially misled by the beliefs of Shelton's mother and older sister that the birthmark on the front of Vasantha's chest was in the same place as the wound on Shelton's chest. Shelton's mother—speaking in 1982—assured us that the mark on Vasantha was "exactly on the spot where the bullet hit Shelton."

If the marks on Vasantha's chest and back were not birthmarks related to a previous life, what were they? The mark on his back was probably the scar of a postnatal lesion, such as a furuncle. I cannot offer an explanation for the round area of hypopigmentation near Vasantha's right nipple. It had faded almost completely by 1982 and does not appear on a photograph that I took in that year.

Comment on the Accuracy of Memories about the Previous Personality's Wound

Shelton's father and mother remembered that he had been shot in the chest, his mother thinking that he was wounded in its center. These were accurate statements so far as they went, and if Vasantha had had a birthmark near his *left* nipple, it would have been (from the center of the chest) within the limit of 10 centimeters that I have taken for satisfactory correspondences.

THE CASE OF BHAGWAN DIN SHARMA

Introduction

This case and the following five cases are those (listed in Category D of Table 13-1) in which a major discordance occurred between the subject's birthmarks and the previous personality's wounds as described in a postmortem report.

Summary of the Case and Its Investigation

Bhagwan Din Sharma was born in October 1936 in the village of Sirai Mira in the Kanauj District of Uttar Pradesh, India. His parents were Ujagar Bhat and his wife, Bitoli. Bhagwan Din was their oldest child, and they subsequently had another son and a daughter. They were members of the Brahmin caste. Ujagar Bhat was a cultivator. They lived in the village of Rampur, which is 5 kilometers northeast of Kanauj.

Bhagwan Din was born with five birthmarks that I shall describe later. He began to speak coherently when he was about 1½ years old, but seems not to have referred to a previous life until he was between 4 and 5. At that time he began saying that he was one Chakko Lal, had been a policeman, had a wife and sons, and had been murdered while sleeping. He stated the names of Chakko Lal's sons and of the village, Gharia, where he was murdered. He seemed particularly focused on the name *Jallabad* and said that he wanted to go there. His parents had never heard of a place by that name, and they thought that he was trying to say *Zindabad.* (This word, which means "revolution," was a popular slogan during the Indian movement for independence from Great Britain in the 1930s.)

Bhagwan Din's statements fitted facts in the life of a subinspector of police and landowner called Chakko Lal. Chakko Lal had originally come from the village of Sarai, which is only 1.5 kilometers north of Rampur. However, he owned property at Gharia, and he was murdered there, during the night of April 26-27, 1936. (We can be sure of this date, because it comes from the record of the trial of the men accused of murdering Chakko Lal.) The motive was never clearly established, but Chakko Lal appears to have been a harsh and oppressive landlord, and

he was also a policeman (although he had retired before his death). In this part of India, such a record may be sufficient grounds for killing a man. Chakko Lal had a wife and two sons. His wife was from Jallabad, so that item of Bhagwan Din's statements fitted the life of Chakko Lal.

Ujagar Bhat said that he had not learned of Chakko Lal's murder until after Bhagwan Din was born. This seemed at first difficult to credit, because Chakko Lal was originally from Sarai (although not born there), and Sarai is only 1.5 kilometers from Rampur. (I remember walking there easily from Rampur.) However, Gharia, where Chakko Lal had settled and where he was murdered, was 20 kilometers from Rampur. News of a murder there would not necessarily travel rapidly or even at all to Rampur.

In the usual way of these cases, Bhagwan Din was taken to Sarai, and informants credited him with recognizing members of Chakko Lal's family who were living there. He also played at drilling other children, which accorded with Chakko Lal's life as a policeman.

I first learned of this case in 1964, when I was in Kanauj for the study of the case of Ravi Shankar Gupta. At that time I had a brief interview with Ujagar Bhat in Rampur. Bhagwan Din was present, but he said little. This was not his fault; with limited time available I attempted to obtain a précis of the case from Ujagar Bhat and did not undertake interviews with other informants.

I then neglected the case until 1969, when I began a more extensive investigation. I went over the ground previously covered with Ujagar Bhat, interviewed Bhagwan Din's mother, Bitoli, and also recorded a long statement from Bhagwan Din himself. Dr. Jamuna Prasad and Dr. L. P. Mehrotra helped me in this phase of the investigation. In 1971 (assisted now by Dr. Mehrotra and K. S. Rawat) I interviewed six members of Chakko Lal's family and a villager of Gharia who was not related to him. Two of these persons had been witnesses of Bhagwan Din's recognitions in Sarai many years earlier, and three said that they had seen Chakko Lal's body after he had been killed. I also met Bhagwan Din again briefly, and I interviewed the headman of Rampur, Mehar Ban Singh Rathor, who had taken Bhagwan Din to Sarai during one of his early visits there.

Although the case was old when I first learned about it in 1964 and older still when I gave it more attention in 1969 and 1971, it seemed straightforward in its main features. The various witnesses agreed on essential matters, although, as often happens, they differed on some details.

In 1971 I also obtained access to the records of the trial of the men accused of murdering Chakko Lal. These showed discrepancies between the wounds noted during the postmortem examination of Chakko Lal and Bhagwan Din's birthmarks. Passing over other details of the case, I shall confine the remainder of this report to a description of Bhagwan Din's birthmarks, the wounds on Chakko Lal's body, and inferences and conjectures that may reconcile the discrepancies between them. In doing this I shall depart from the order of topics that I usually follow in these case reports and describe Bhagwan Din's birthmarks next.

Bhagwan Din's Birthmarks

Figure 13-8 shows a birthmark on Bhagwan Din's forehead. It was about 1.5 centimeters long and at its widest about 2-3 millimeters wide. It had the appearance of a healed acquired wound. Figure 13-9 shows a somewhat similar mark on the posterior part of the head. It was about the same width, but slightly longer than the mark on the forehead, being about 3 centimeters long. It was hairless.

Figure 13-10 shows two marks on the lateral side of the right upper chest in the area of the sixth and seventh ribs (if I have counted them correctly). The upper of these marks was round and about 1 centimeter in diameter. The lower one was smaller and somewhat ovoid in shape. It was about 8 millimeters long and 5 millimeters wide.

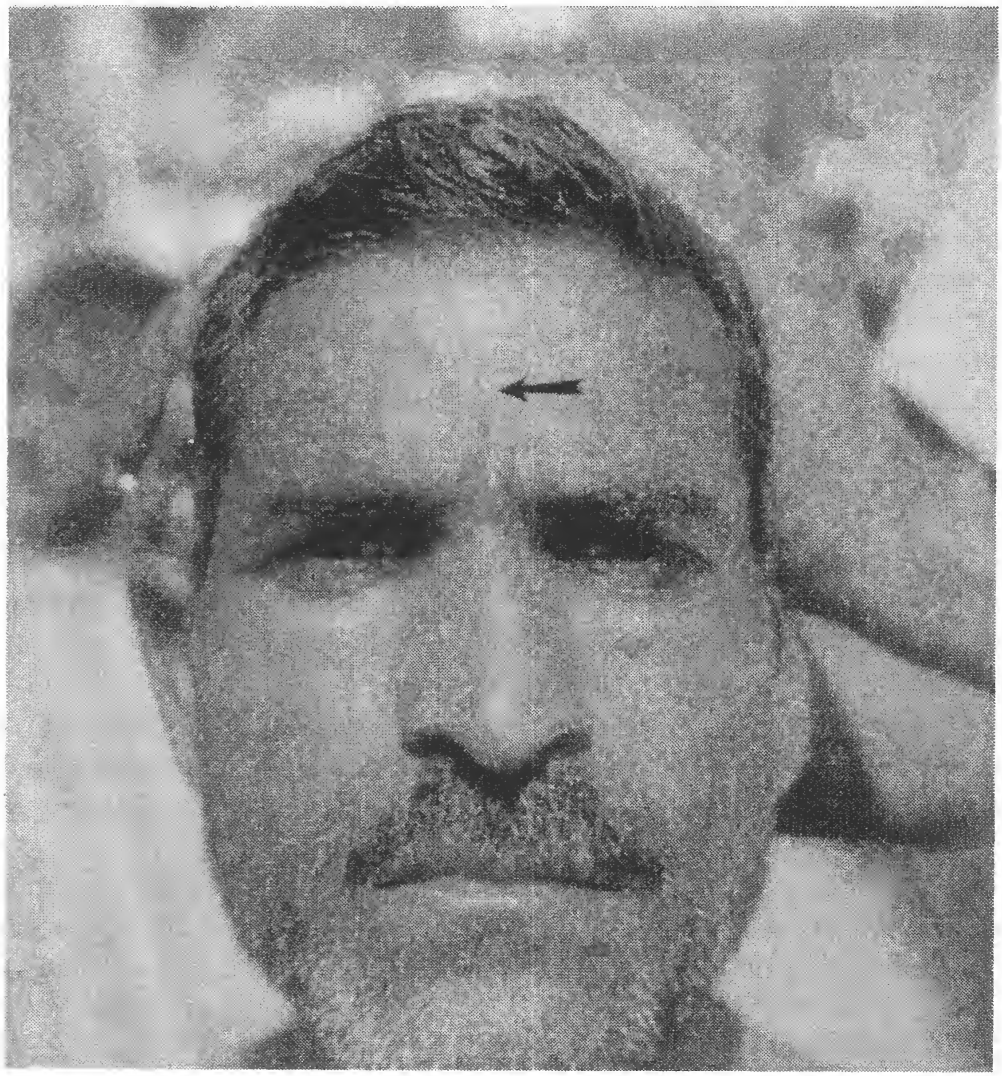

Figure 13-8 Birthmark on the forehead of Bhagwan Din as it appeared in November 1969, when he was 33 years old. The birthmark was a linear area, almost in the midline, about 1.5 centimeters long and 2-3 millimeters wide.

Figure 13-9 Birthmark in the parieto-occipital area of Bhagwan Din's head as it appeared in November 1969, when he was 33 years old. The birthmark was a linear area of hairlessness about 3 centimeters long and 3 millimeters wide.

Figure 13-11 shows a birthmark just to the left of the midline in the lower part of the front of the chest. It is at the level of the lower end of the sternum. It also was round and about 1 centimeter in diameter.

On the question of whether these marks had been present at birth Ujagar Bhat and Bitoli made generally concordant statements. In 1964 Ujagar Bhat said there had been only four birthmarks and did not mention the mark on Bhagwan Din's forehead. However, in going over the list of birthmarks again in 1969, he did mention this one. He said that he had observed the birthmarks when Bhagwan Din was 10 days old; his wife and her baby had been isolated for 10 days after his birth.

Bitoli said that she had noted five birthmarks on Bhagwan Din after his birth. She recalled the one on the forehead, the one at the back of the head,

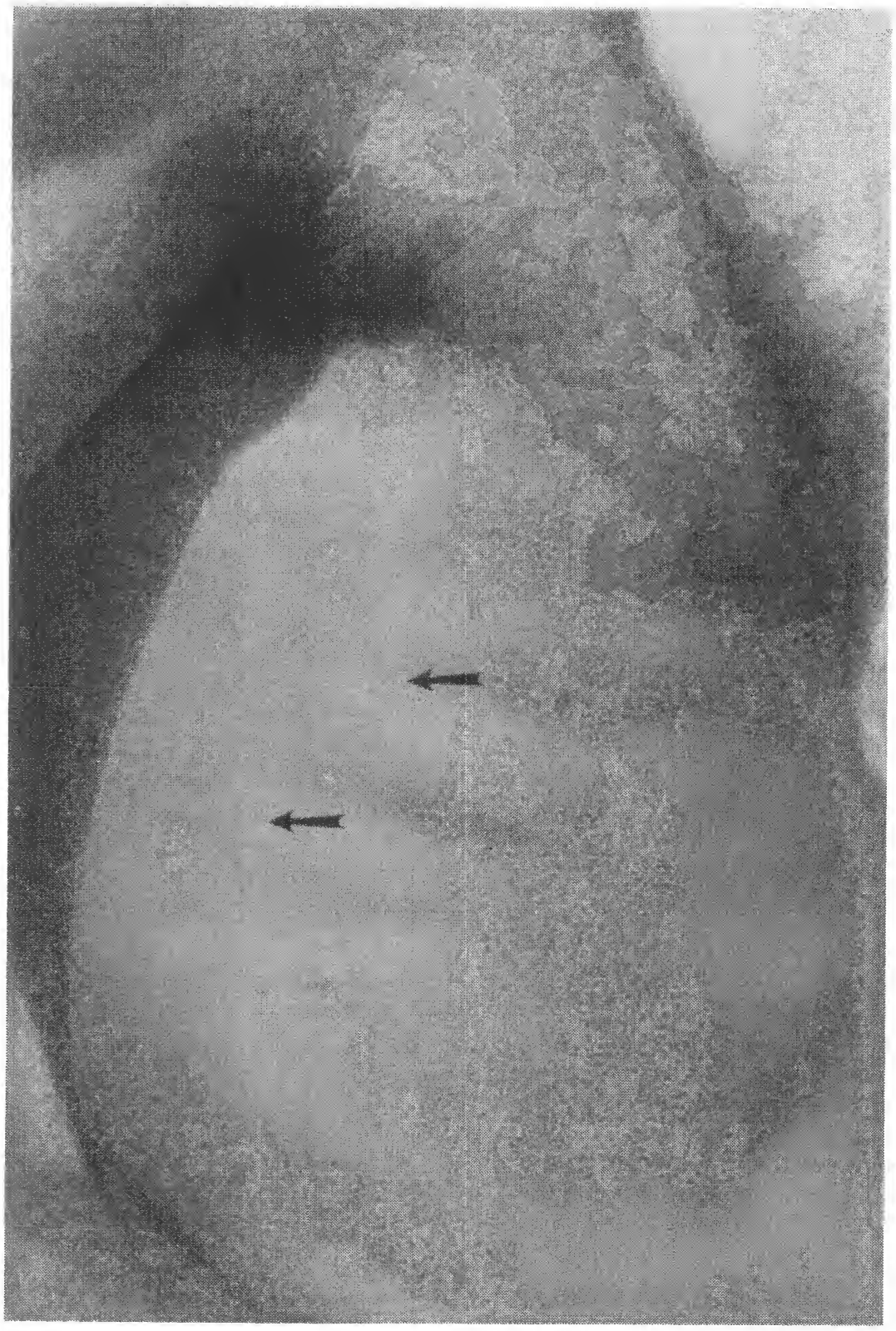

Figure 13-10 Right chest of Bhagwan Din as it appeared in November 1969, when he was 33 years old. There were two areas of puckered skin, a superior one that was round and an inferior one that was slightly ovoid. The upper mark was about 1 centimeter in diameter, the lower one had dimensions of about 8 millimeters by 5 millimeters.

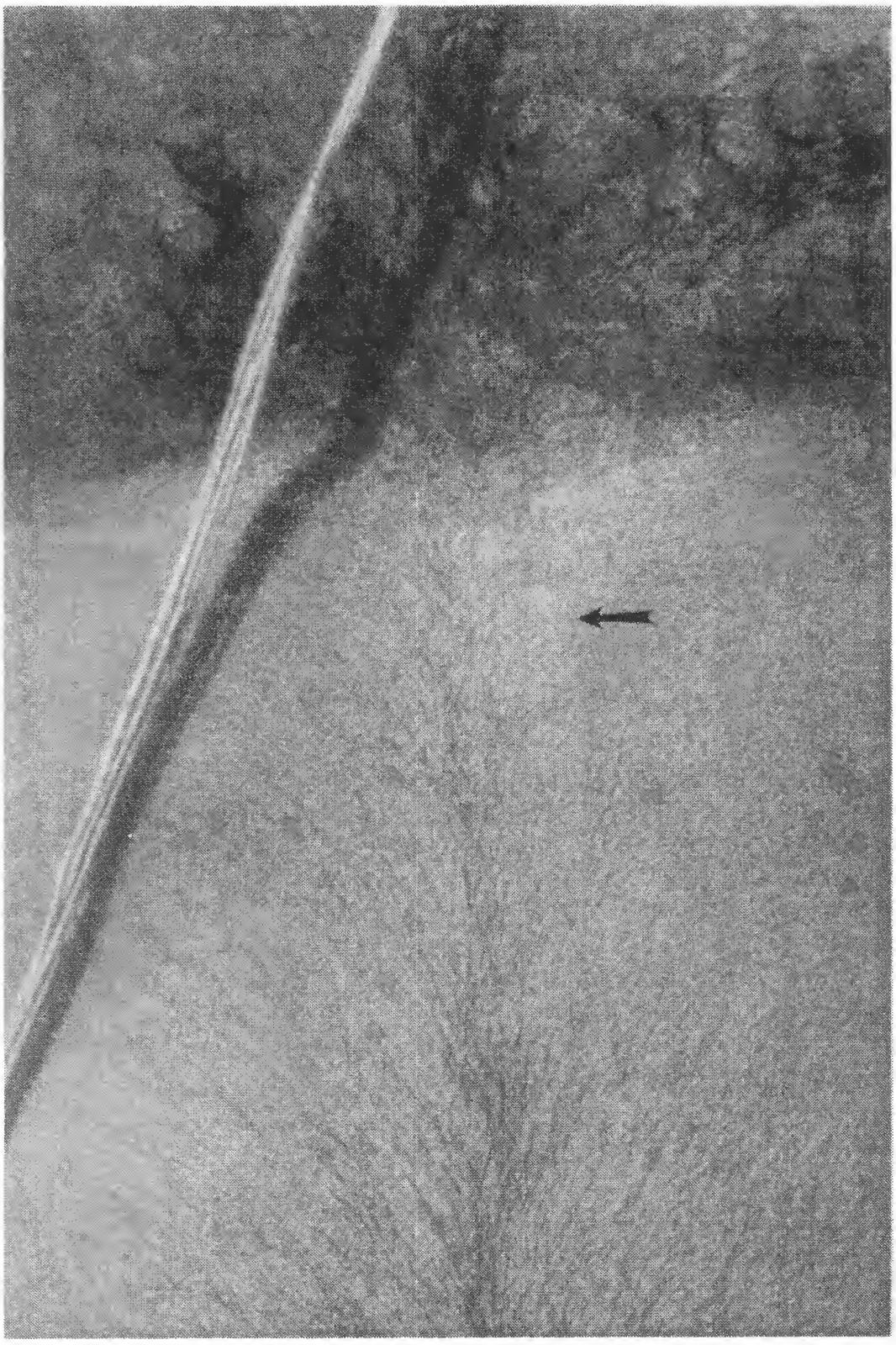

Figure 13-11 Birthmark on Bhagwan Din's anterior chest as it appeared in November 1969, when he was 33 years old. It was slightly to the left of the midline and approximately over the xiphoid process. It was a roundish area of puckering with scanty hair, approximately 1 centimeter in diameter.

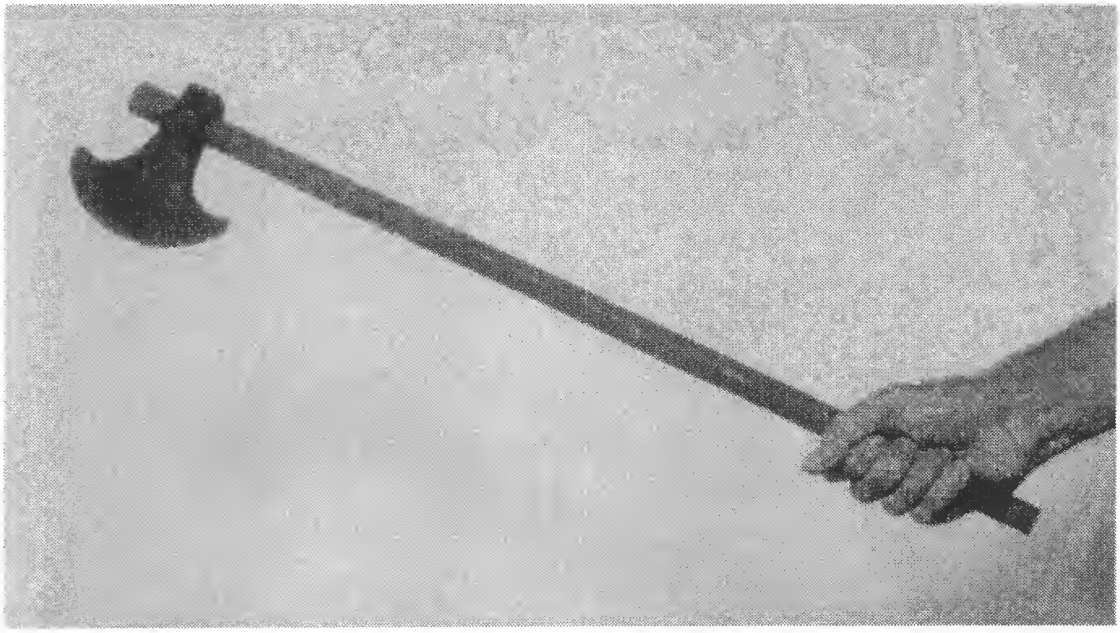

Figure 13-12 Kanta of northern India. The instrument is ordinarily used for chopping fodder.

and the two on the (right) chest, but she did not remember where the fifth had been. (Ujagar Bhat was present when we talked with his wife, but he did not prompt her.) She said the birthmarks had not been bleeding or discharging any fluid when Bhagwan Din was born. Both she and her husband did note that the area of the birthmark on the forehead was soft when Bhagwan Din was born, and Bitoli said it remained soft until he was between 2 and 3 years old. (This suggests that there may have been some inflammation of the area that eventually resolved.)

I failed to ask Ujagar Bhat and Bitoli whether Bhagwan Din's birthmarks had changed in location or appearance since his birth. Bhagwan Din himself said that they had not changed in location, but they had become less depressed below the surrounding skin than they were earlier.

Bhagwan Din's Statements in 1969 about Chakko Lal's Murder

In 1969 Bhagwan Din said that he still remembered some details of Chakko Lal's death. He recalled that (at the time of his death) he had a loaded gun by his side. The murderers scaled a wall and at first attacked him with kantas. (These are a kind of axe, ordinarily used for chopping fodder; Figure 6-15 shows one and is reproduced here for the reader's convenience as Figure 13-12.) They then shot him. (Bhagwan Din did not say with what weapon Chakko Lal was shot.) After that, they tried to burn Chakko Lal's body. Accepting this statement as a memory entails believing that Chakko Lal was still alive when the murderers burned his body or at least somehow obtained awareness of this last event.

Comment. Bhagwan Din did not say what kind of a gun Chakko Lal had had. Ujagar Bhat said that he had learned that Chakko Lal had been sleeping on a bed with his revolver lying nearby and that the murderers had used this weapon to shoot him.

At this stage, therefore, my associates and I conjectured the following sequence of events for the murder. The murderers had approached the sleeping Chakko Lal and struck him first on the forehead with a kanta. This stunned, but did not kill him; he sat up, and they hit him with a kanta on the back of the head. Then they took his revolver and shot him three times, twice in the right side of the chest and once in the lower part of the front of the chest. I thought this reconstruction of the murder would adequately account for all five of Bhagwan Din's birthmarks. It did not.

Statements of Eyewitnesses Who Saw Chakko Lal's Body after His Death

Two members of Chakko Lal's family said, in 1971, that they had gone to the scene of the crime and seen his dead body. A villager of Gharia also said that he had seen the body.

Cheddi Lal was the son of Chakko Lal's brother, and in 1971 he was about 65 years old. He remembered that Chakko Lal had a "bullet wound in the chest." Asked if there were other wounds he said that perhaps there had been, but he had not seen others. He said there were impressions around the neck as if Chakko Lal had been choked.

Babu Ram, a native of Gharia but not a relative of Chakko Lal, appeared to be between 55 and 60 years old in 1971. He said that he had been about 15 years old at the time of Chakko Lal's murder. (Even if he had been 55 in 1971, there would still be a gap of several years to account for; but vagueness about ages and dates is common among Indian villagers.) He said that Chakko Lal had been shot by a gun or rifle that was "countrymade" and had been wounded in the chest. There were other wounds, but when Babu Ram reached the scene, Chakko Lal's clothes were on fire, and the flames prevented Babu Ram from getting a good view of the wounds. He concluded his statement by saying: "A bullet wound had gone through the chest. Of that I am definite."

Siri Ram was Chakko Lal's first cousin. He said (in 1971) that he was about 65 years old, but to me he appeared 10 years older. He said Chakko Lal had a wound on one thigh (he could not remember which), one in the corner of the chest, and one on the forehead. There were "many other wounds," and he gestured with his hands to indicate other sites, but the ones he specified "were deep." Siri Ram remembered that a cloth had been thrust into Chakko Lal's mouth and that the murderers had set fire to his clothes.

The Report of the Postmortem on Chakko Lal

I did not obtain a copy of the report of the postmortem examination of Chakko Lal's body that was carried out at the Fategarh Hospital (north of Kanauj).

I do not remember why this was unobtainable, because a postmortem report is usually included in the complete record of the trial proceedings. I did, however, study and copy part of the order of committal and parts of the judge's summation at the trial of the accused in October, 1936.

The order of committal said that "Chakko Lal was shot dead by somebody with a muzzle-loading gun. The investigating officer found two gunshots[5] near the wound at the neck of the deceased. The civil surgeon also extracted a shot at the time of postmortem examination."

In his summation, the judge, Ganga Prasad Varma, referred to details of the postmortem report, and I assume that he did so accurately.

Before coming to the details mentioned by the judge, I will say again that the pathologist's principal duty, and almost the only matter that interests him, is ascertaining the cause of death. (I say this from my experience of examining hundreds of postmortem reports during searches through records—searches that my associates and I usually had to make by ourselves—for the correct ones that we wanted.) The trial judge, too, is mainly concerned with the medical cause of the victim's death, although also, in cases of murder, with who committed it. In the present case the judge mentioned no wounds of the forehead or head that corresponded to kanta wounds, if Chakko Lal had been hit by a kanta as Bhagwan Din said he was. I cannot say whether or not the pathologist mentioned such wounds in his report, because the judge was obviously extracting from it what he considered relevant to the cause of death. If the pathologist had noted such wounds in his report, the judge would not have emphasized them unless he thought them likely to have been fatal; and he might have omitted such details entirely in his summation.

Readers may wonder why the murderers resorted to a kanta (if they did) and did not use a firearm to begin with. We can conjecture that they were too poor to afford even a countrymade gun. They might have also wished to avoid the noise that a firearm would make. When they found that blows with a kanta were insufficient, they resorted to a gun, perhaps Chakko Lal's own, which was conveniently handy.

I next give a long extract from Judge Varma's summation.

> ....The bedding on the cot was found burnt at some places and the dead body was charred in different portions. The postmortem examination of the dead body showed that the front surface of the body was charred, namely moustaches in part, chin, front of neck, front of chest, front of belly, front of right thigh, front of right leg and foot. Almost the whole of the left thigh and left leg, the left hand up to the elbow were charred and the right forearm in the inner side and the right arm on the inner side were also charred.

[5]The judge did not further specify the nature of the gunshots, so I do not know whether they were bullets from a rifle (or revolver) or pellets from the cartridge of a shotgun. If he was correct in saying the weapon was muzzle-loading, it was not Chakko Lal's service revolver; but Chakko Lal himself might have had a "countrymade" pistol of which the murderers availed themselves.

1. The dead body had a rounded contused wound penetrating the belly about 5 inches below the left nipple and the skin all around was charred.[6]
2. [It had] an oval contused wound in the lower part of the back of the neck, about the middle, deep into the tissues; and under this injury there was an ecchymosis spread over an area about 8 inches by 6 inches on the back of the right chest, and the second and third ribs were found fractured. The sixth and seventh ribs were fractured on the left side. This wound was found penetrating the chest after fracturing the second and the third ribs, and the right lung was torn into pieces; so was the pericardium and the heart. The diaphragm was ruptured at several places and the omentum was coming out of the first wound [No. 1 above]. The stomach showed a rent at the upper margin, and the left lobe of the liver was ruptured.

According to the medical opinion death was due to gunshot wounds. [word illegible] shot was recovered from the right pleural cavity. The medical evidence showed that the shot must have been fired from close-up, that is, within 5 or 6 feet, and that the assailant was probably at the side of the deceased. It is thus clear that Chakko Lal was shot dead.

According to Siri Ram, the accused men bribed the police and witnesses, and they were acquitted.

Comment on the Discrepancies between Wounds and Birthmarks

There probably was no independent eyewitness of the murder itself. If any villagers, attracted by the sound of gunfire, had seen the murderers leaving the scene of the crime, they would have needed bribing in order to leave the accused persons with unchallenged alibis.

Although Bhagwan Din mentioned kantas, and both he and the judge mentioned a gun, Mehar Ban Singh Rathor, the headman of Rampur, suggested the use of a third weapon. He had not seen Chakko Lal's body, but he had examined Bhagwan Din's birthmarks. Reasoning backward from them, he suggested that kantas had been used (for wounds corresponding to the birthmarks on Bhagwan Din's forehead and at the back of his head) and also spears having a rounded point that would make a round wound. Although we cannot exclude the use of such a spear or spears, bullets would also make round wounds, especially at the wounds of entry; and we know, from the judge's summation, that firearms of some kind were used in the murder.

[6]The two wounds are not numbered in the original document. I have numbered them for ease in distinguishing and referring to them. Readers may note that the judge includes references to both wounds in the same paragraph. In some places one cannot be sure to which wound he is referring. For example, the fractures of the sixth and seventh ribs on the left side might have been produced by the bullet causing wound Number 1, or they might have resulted from the bullet of wound Number 2 if it entered at the neck and traveled inferiorly and medially across the inside of the chest.

The important question is whether we can reconcile the three round (or roundish) birthmarks on Bhagwan Din's chest (right side, laterally, and lower chest, anteriorly, just to the left of the midline) with the two major wounds mentioned by the judge.

Unfortunately, the judge did not specify whether the two major wounds he described appeared to be wounds of entry or of exit, and it may be that, from the charring of the body, the pathologist himself had not been able to include this distinction in his report. Nor is the size of either wound given.

The birthmark on the lower part of Bhagwan Din's chest, just to the left of the midline (Figure 13-11), could conceivably correspond to wound Number 1, especially if we allow for the possibility of a movement by the birthmark after birth so that it shifted medially and also, to a lesser extent, superiorly. A bullet entering in this area might have produced much of the damage to the internal viscera that the judge mentioned.

Wound Number 2 (at the back of the lower neck on the right side) seems to have no counterpart whatever in the birthmarks. Furthermore, the two birthmarks on the right side of the chest do not correspond with any wounds mentioned by the judge. I can think of three possible explanations for these discrepancies, none of them fully satisfactory.

First, the pathologist, who was examining a charred body, may have overlooked two wounds of entry (which are often small) on the right side of the chest. The wound at the back of the lower neck on the right side might have been a wound of exit. (Exit wounds are commonly larger than entry wounds.) One bullet was found in the right pleural cavity, so it had not exited. However, a second bullet might have struck bone, perhaps of the spinal column, and changed course so that it came out at the neck. This might have happened readily if the bullet had entered the chest at an acute angle instead of at a right angle. This conjecture receives support from the finding of two shots near the wound in the neck. Its weakness lies in the absence of a noted birthmark on Bhagwan Din's neck that would correspond to this wound of exit. However, a faint birthmark might have been there, not been noticed, and later faded. (The birthmark on Maung Tin Win's back [Figure 5-15], corresponding to a wound of exit, is larger in area, but much less prominent and more difficult to see than the birthmark on his abdomen [Figure 5-14] corresponding to a wound of entry.)

Second, the police and medical evidence showed that at least three shots were fired; but perhaps four were fired. Chakko Lal was killed by the first three shots, one entering at the front of his chest and two at the right side of the chest. (As I mentioned, the pathologist may have overlooked wounds in the right chest because of the charring of the body.) As murderers often do, the persons killing Chakko Lal may have decided to make sure of their work and fired a fourth bullet which caused the wound noted at the base of the neck. However, no birthmark corresponded to this wound, perhaps because Chakko Lal had by that time lost consciousness. The extensive contusion and ecchymosis around this wound shows that he was not yet dead; but he might have been unconscious. (In Chapter 14 I

discuss the possible relationship between the previous personality's consciousness when wounded and the occurrence of birthmarks corresponding to wounds.)

Third, the pathologist may have faked his report in order to discredit witnesses. A High Court Judge of Uttar Pradesh with whom I discussed this possibility told me that medical men in his state did sometimes fraudulently alter their postmortem reports to please a criminal able to pay. The fabrication can help defendants in different ways. If a witness says, for example, that he saw the accused running from the scene with a kanta, the defense attorney can confront him with a false medical report showing that the deceased died of gunshot wounds with no mention of wounds by a kanta. Or, if a witness is so bold as to claim that he saw in what part of the body the deceased was wounded, the defense attorney can discredit him by producing a false postmortem report showing that the deceased was wounded in an entirely different region of the body. In the present case I have no evidence that the pathologist's report was faked, although if the accused men bribed witnesses (as Siri Ram said they had), they might also have paid the pathologist to alter his report.

In closing this account I wish to emphasize that I do not endorse any of the three possible explanations I have put forward to explain the apparent discrepancies between the birthmarks and the wounds noted in the postmortem report. (If forced to choose among them, I would select the second.) I am so unsatisfied with the state of evidence in this case that for some time I considered omitting it from this work. I have, however, decided to include it, because, along with the other cases reported in this chapter, it shows the uncertainties that sometimes occur during the investigation of these cases.

Comment on Accuracy of Memories about the Previous Personality's Wounds

The three persons who said they had seen Chakko Lal's body after his murder all agreed that he had been wounded in the chest. Two of them said he had been shot with a firearm. The third informant (Siri Ram) also mentioned wounds on Chakko Lal's thigh and forehead.

I have suggested, as a bare possibility, that the birthmark on Bhagwan Din's lower chest, just to the left of the midline, might correspond to wound Number 1 on Chakko Lal, described by the judge as "five inches below the left nipple." It seems to me, however, that investigators of this case who relied on the testimony of the eyewitnesses might have been misled into affirming a correspondence between a birthmark and a wound that did not exist.

THE CASE OF PAPPU SINGH

Summary of the Case and Its Investigation

Vir Bhan Singh was born in his mother's village of Uduatnagar, District Barabanki, Uttar Pradesh, India, on August 12, 1971. He was quickly given the

pet name of Pappu, and I shall use it in this report. His parents were Shivmangal Singh and his wife, Mithilesh. They were members of the Thakur (Kshatriya) caste, and Shivmangal was a cultivator in poor economic circumstances. Pappu was his parents' first child; they had had one other child, a son, by the time we investigated this case in 1974. They lived in the village of Kussaila, District Unnao, Uttar Pradesh.

As I mentioned, Pappu was born in his mother's village, and his maternal grandmother (who was then herself nursing a baby son of her own) breast-fed him for a time. One day not long after Pappu's birth his grandmother noticed the birthmark on his right chest (Figure 13-13) and drew it to her daughter's attention. They both thought: "He has a third breast." Pappu's father saw the birthmark soon after his wife brought the baby back to Kussaila when he was about 2 months old. Shivmangal also thought that Pappu had a "third breast."

Pappu started speaking between the ages of 1 and 2, and when he was between 2 and 3 he began to state details about a previous life. He said that his name was Lala Bhaiya and that he had a grinding mill in a place called Atah. He pointed to his chest and said that he had been shot there. His grandmother's brother had died, and she took Pappu to the ceremony for the death anniversary. They passed through Atah, where Pappu saw a mill that he said was "his." Farther on at a place called Pawa, near Bidhnu Bazaar, Pappu said: "I was killed at Bidhnu Bazaar."

On March 16, 1969, a resident of Atah named Shivshanker Lal Tiwari, who was generally known as Lala Bhaiya, had been murdered while returning home from the market at Bidhnu Bazaar. Pappu's statements accorded with details in the life and death of Lala Bhaiya. Word about them spread to Lala Bhaiya's family, and in June 1974 they came to see Pappu, who was credited with recognizing some of them. He was also taken to Atah, where he recognized Lala Bhaiya's mother and his oldest son, Raj Kumar.

Soon afterward newspapers learned about the case, and a report of it appeared in a Hindi daily, *Nav Bharat Times*, on July 19, 1974. At that time I was soon to start a field trip in India; and Dr. Satwant Pasricha and I (with John Russell) went to Kussaila and Atah in October 1974. We thus reached the scene of the case within a few months of its development and when the subject was just a little more than 3 years old.

Lala Bhaiya's son gave us the date of his father's murder and the name of the principal suspect; and with this information we were able to locate the report of the murder in the Crime Register of the Superintendent of Police in Unnao, the district town. We also examined and copied relevant parts of the postmortem report on the examination of the body of Shivshanker Lal Tiwari. This was in the Civil Surgeon's office of Unnao. This report stated that Lala Bhaiya had been shot on the *left* side of the chest, whereas Pappu's birthmark was on the *right* side of his chest. The medical officer in charge in October 1974 impatiently ordered the book of postmortem reports to be carried away from me before I had completed my examination of it. However, I had already noted the discrepancy in location between the principal wound on Lala Bhaiya's chest and Pappu's birthmark. The discrepancy troubled me

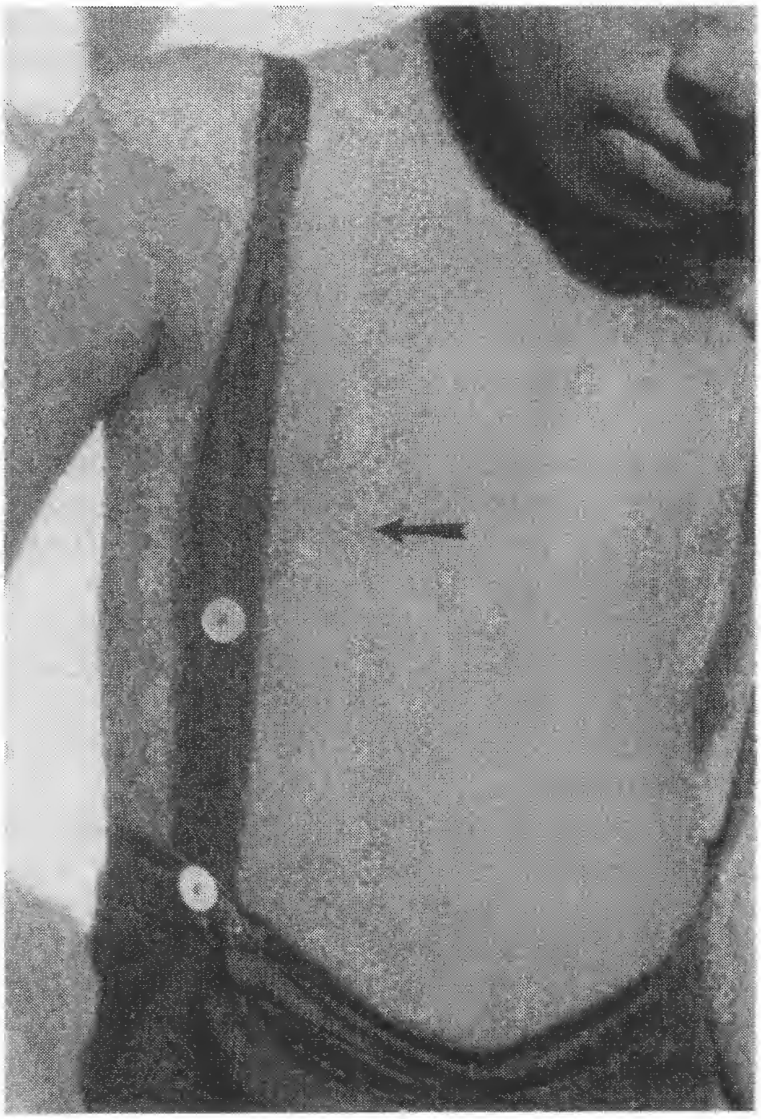

Figure 13-13 Birthmark on Pappu Singh as it appeared in October 1974, when he was a little over 3 years of age. The birthmark was at a site below the right nipple near where supernumerary nipples sometimes occur, and it had the appearance of one. It was a round area of hyperpigmentation approximately 1 centimeter in diameter. Its center was depressed.

so much that I resolved to examine the postmortem report again and more thoroughly than I had been able to do. I did this a year later, in October 1975. On this occasion a different medical officer was in charge, and he became interested in the case so that we were able to discuss fully together the details of the postmortem report.

I have not returned to Kussaila since 1974 and have no information about Pappu's later development.

Persons Interviewed during the Investigation

In October 1974, Dr. Pasricha and I interviewed eight informants from the two families concerned in the case. For Pappu's side of the case we interviewed both

his parents, his paternal aunt, and (more briefly) his paternal grandparents. Pappu was affable, and Dr. Pasricha talked with him about his still fresh memories. On the side of Lala Bhaiya we interviewed two of his sons and one of his daughters-in-law. (A third son had been murdered, by the same persons, after Lala Bhaiya's death.)

Relevant Facts of Geography and Possibilities for Normal Means of Communication between the Two Families

Kussaila and Atah are about 5 kilometers apart. They were then medium-sized villages. Bidhnu Bazaar, where Lala Bhaiya was murdered, is about 4 kilometers beyond Atah (going from Kussaila) and thus about 9 kilometers from Kussaila.

Shivmangal Singh had attended school in Atah, and he was well acquainted with Lala Bhaiya. They could not have been close friends, because of their membership in different castes. Also, they belonged to widely different economic classes; Lala Bhaiya's family were prosperous landlords, whereas Pappu's were peasants living close to poverty. Thus I am not surprised that Lala Bhaiya's son said the two families were acquainted only. Lala Bhaiya's murder was sensational, and it received much publicity, even though the area had a high murder rate. Shivmangal learned about it soon after it occurred, but he did not see Lala Bhaiya's body after the murder.

There was a further link between the families. Lala Bhaiya's maternal aunt (*mausi* in Hindi) had married a man of Kussaila, and she was living there when the case developed.

It is unlikely that Pappu made any statements about matters not known to members of his family, and I was somewhat surprised when Lala Bhaiya's youngest son, Ramesh Kumar, told us that he thought the name (Lakhpat) of the principal suspect in his father's murder—which had figured in Pappu's statements—was not likely to be known to persons outside their family.

The Life, Death, and Character of Lala Bhaiya

Shivshanker Lal Tiwari, popularly known as Lala Bhaiya, was born in about 1907 in Atah, where he lived all his life. He and his wife had three sons, all of them young men at the time of his death. He was a Brahmin zamindar. The zamindars—we met some exemplars in the report of Bir Sahai's case—were revenue farmers who effectively exercised the powers of landlords over tenants. As such, many peasants regarded them as oppressors, and they became targets for land reformers.

On March 16, 1969, Lala Bhaiya was returning from the market at Bidhnu Bazaar. A man accompanied him to carry his bag, and they were both on foot. In an isolated place along the road to Atah several men attacked Lala Bhaiya and his companion and killed them both. Because there were no eyewitnesses other than the criminals themselves, they escaped. There were suspects, however, and these belonged to the quasi-communist group of terrorists known in India as naxalites. Lala Bhaiya's middle son had some information about a suspect in his

father's murder, but before he could testify about this, he too was killed, in January 1971. After his murder, the naxalites distributed leaflets about the two murders which they identified as acts of political correction. Two of them were then arrested, indicted, and tried for the murders. They were acquitted, however, presumably for lack of evidence. The government appealed the verdict, and the cases were continuing in 1974.

Lala Bhaiya had been the magnate of Atah. When we interviewed members of his family, their house had sadly deteriorated, but we could tell that in its prime it must have been a magnificent residence.

Lala Bhaiya was not a particularly religious person, but he conformed in outward matters to what was expected of a Brahmin. His oldest son, Raj Kumar, described him as a "staunch Brahmin." He believed in untouchability and was meticulously clean. He was a strict vegetarian and did not eat meat, eggs, garlic, or onions. He was careful to wear sandals or shoes made from the skins of animals who had died naturally instead of being killed for leather. He liked sweets and *ghee* (clarified butter), but was not unusually fond of milk.

The Memories of Lala Bhaiya's Sons about His Wounds. Lala Bhaiya's older surviving son (Raj Kumar) said that his father had been shot in the head and then shot in the chest; he did not remember on which side of the chest the wound had occurred. His younger son (Ramesh Kumar), after first saying that Pappu's birthmark "was exactly where my father was shot," hesitated, and then said he was unsure, but thought the bullet had hit his father on the left side (of the chest), whereas Pappu's mark was on the right.

The Report of the Postmortem on Lala Bhaiya

The report described nine wounds (or groups of wounds) on the body. Of these, Numbers 1, 2, 8, and 9 are the most important, and I shall cite their descriptions from my notes copied from the report.

1. Incised wound, oblique 3 and ¼ inches by ¾ inch, brain deep, brain matter leaking out on the left side of the head....
2. Incised wound, oblique 2 and ½ inches by ¾ inch, brain deep, brain matter leaking out from the wound crossing the injury on the left side of the head [that is, wound Number 1].

Wounds Number 3 through 7 were similar to the first two wounds. They were all described as incised wounds on the head and all bone (or cartilage) deep; but none went through the skull, and so brain tissue did not escape from them. They varied in length between 1 inch and 3 inches.

8. Firearm wound, 1 and ¼ inches in diameter, chest cavity deep on the left side of the chest, 2 and ½ inches below the left nipple. Margins inverted, scorched and the surrounding tissues blackened (wound of entry).

In relation to this wound later parts of the report stated that the seventh and eighth ribs on the left side were fractured. The heart was "punctured through and through." Two pieces of wadding and a shot were found in the left side of the chest.

> 9. Eight firearm wounds, ½ inch in diameter, chest cavity deep, margins everted; no blackening of surrounding skin, on the right side of the chest outer and upper portion near the axilla (wounds of exit).

Death was attributed to shock and hemorrhage.

Comment. The firearm used in the murder of Lala Bhaiya was a shotgun. Three features of the wound of entry—the large single wound of entry, the scorching and blackening around the wound (from smoke and unburned powder), and the presence of wadding (from the cartridge) in the wound—all indicate that the weapon was discharged close to the victim. Fatteh (1976, p. 108) stated that blackening due to smoke may occur when the muzzle of the weapon is up to 15 inches (approximately 37.5 centimeters) from the victim. However, Gordon and Shapiro (1982, p. 352) wrote that a single wound of entry and blackening around the wound may occur at ranges up to 90 centimeters (about 3 feet). Figure 13-14 shows a chest wound made by a shotgun fired at a close range.

The incised wounds on the head must have been inflicted by a bladed weapon, and it was heavy enough to fracture the skull in two places; therefore, these head wounds were not made with a knife (unless it were an extremely heavy type of knife such as has figured in murders in Burma and Thailand). More likely, the head wounds were made by an axe similar to the type illustrated in Figure 13-12.

I wish that I had been able to interview the murderers of Lala Bhaiya. Failing that, I can only conjecture how they proceeded to kill him. I believe that they first struck Lala Bhaiya on the head with an axe and that the head wounds stunned and felled him. The man with the shotgun then approached and shot him from a distance of less than a meter. The wound from the shotgun tore apart the heart, and, if it had been made first, death would have occurred instantly. In that case, there would have been no need to strike Lala Bhaiya seven times on the head with an axe. If, as I believe, the head wounds were inflicted first, Lala Bhaiya was unconscious when he was shot at close range with the shotgun.

Statements and Recognitions Made by Pappu

Pappu's family members, chiefly his parents, credited him with having made 10 statements about the previous life before he met members of Lala Bhaiya's family. These included mention of Lala Bhaiya's name and of his village, Atah. He also stated the name Lakhpat (as that of the principal murderer), although he may have mispronounced this name as "Lakhtan". Another proper name he mentioned was that of Bidhnu Bazaar. He said that he had been killed there and while going to the bazaar; this was slightly off, because Lala Bhaiya had in fact come away from

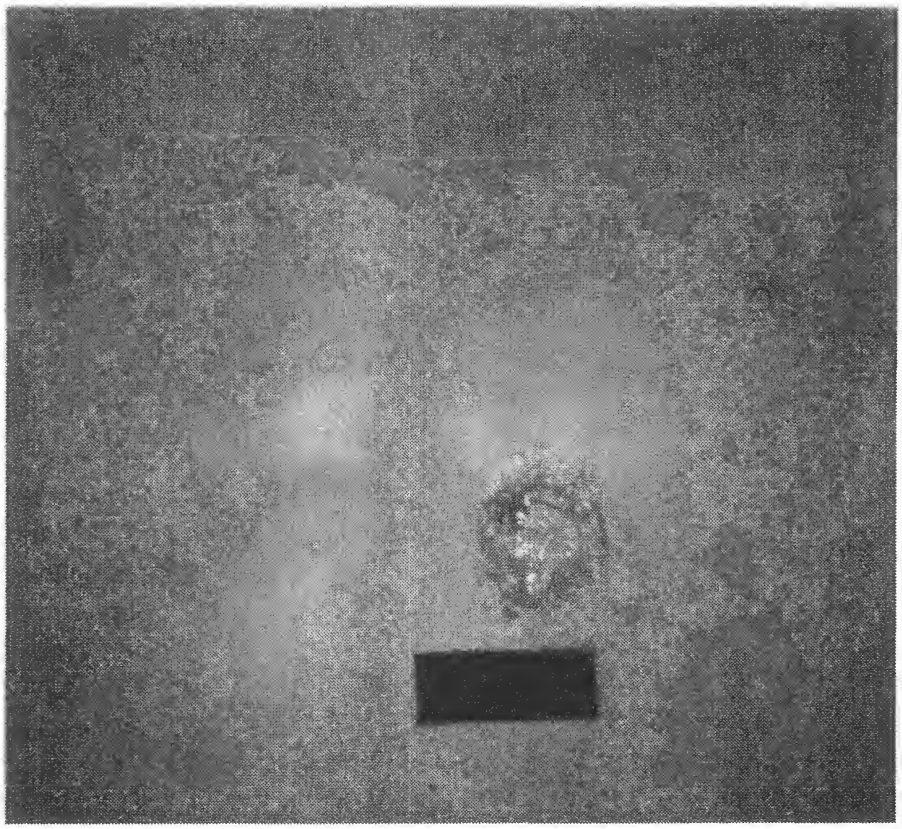

Figure 13-14 Wound from a shotgun fired at close range into the left chest of a man murdered in Virginia. The wound on this man was not far from the site of wound Number 8 on Lala Bhaiya. Note that nearly all the pellets have entered the body together. (Courtesy of Dr. David Wiecking.)

the market at Bidhnu Bazaar and was on his way home when he was killed. However, the murder occurred within 200 meters of Bidhnu Bazaar.

With the exceptions noted, all but one of Pappu's statements were correct for the life of Lala Bhaiya. The single statement that was clearly wrong was his assertion that he had been on a bicycle when he was killed. (This is what Shivmangal and Ramesh Kumar [Lala Bhaiya's youngest son] remembered him to have said; his mother thought Pappu had said he was going on foot when killed.) Lala Bhaiya usually went to and from the market on a bicycle, but on the day he was killed he had gone on foot.

Pappu was also said to have recognized one of Lala Bhaiya's sons, his mother, his maternal aunt, and his grinding mill. Witnesses disagreed about whether he had or had not stated the name of Raj Kumar (Lala Bhaiya's oldest son) when he said: "He is my son."

Pappu's Behavior Related to the Previous Life

As have many subjects of these cases, Pappu sometimes compared his mother unfavorably with the mother of the previous life, and he sometimes threat-

ened to go off to Atah. He also showed at times what I call an "adult attitude" toward older members of his family. For example, he called his father "Shivmangal" instead of using a Hindi name for father, such as Pitaji. He would say: "Shivmangal. You are not my father."

Pappu was observed to be rather cleaner than Indian children of his age. He had some fondness for sugar and milk, but his dietary tastes were not unusual for his family. He certainly did not show the Brahmin snobbery that other subjects of lower-caste families who remembered previous lives as Brahmins have often manifested.

He had no phobia for guns; on the contrary, he rather liked them. His mother said that he had asked—even insisted—that his family get him a gun so that he could take revenge on the murderers of the previous life he remembered. (His father had not heard him express a desire for revenge.)

Pappu's Birthmark

Figure 13-13 shows that Pappu's birthmark was an area of hyperpigmentation located about 3 centimeters below his right nipple. It was round and approximately 1 centimeter in diameter. Its center was depressed.

The birthmark was in an area where supernumerary nipples often occur. As I mentioned in the report of the case of Som Pit Hancharoen (Chapter 5), the incidence of such supernumerary nipples has varied in different series from 0.4% (Guest, 1923) through 1% (De Cholnoky, 1939) to 5% (Evans, 1959). Pappu's mark was more lateral, away from the mammary line, than are most supernumerary nipples. Guest (1923) stated that all the supernumerary nipples she found that were inferior to the nipple (all but one of 83 instances in her series of about 20,000 children) were also medial to the nipple. However, supernumerary nipples may occur away from the mammary line (De Cholnoky, 1939).

At one time I thought that Pappu's birthmark might correspond to one of the eight exit wounds caused by the shotgun pellets that struck Lala Bhaiya (wound Number 9 of the postmortem report). However, the postmortem report located these wounds more laterally and nearer to the axilla than Pappu's birthmark was.

When we were at Kussaila, we asked about other birthmarks Pappu may have had. His father seemed vaguely to remember that he had had a birthmark on his head, and he even searched around a little under Pappu's hair in order to find one. He did not succeed, and later he said that Pappu had had no birthmarks other than the one on his chest.

Comment. Our question about other birthmarks was not influenced by our knowledge of the postmortem report, which we had not studied at the time we were in Kussaila. However, Shivmangal from his normal knowledge of how Lala Bhaiya had been killed might have expected Pappu to have a birthmark on his head as well as one on his chest. As I mentioned, Shivmangal had not seen Lala Bhaiya's body after the murder; but almost certainly he had talked with persons who had and who might have described the wounds on the head to him.

My opinion is that Pappu had no birthmark related to a previous life. The absence of a birthmark corresponding to the shotgun wound on Lala Bhaiya may derive from Lala Bhaiya's unconsciousness when he was shot. This assumes that I have correctly understood the order in which he first received the wounds on his head from a bladed weapon and then the wound from the shotgun. Pappu's later awareness that he had been shot in the chest would, on this hypothesis, represent knowledge of an event happening after Lala Bhaiya had lost consciousness. If Lala Bhaiya was first struck on the head with an axe, I should have expected Pappu to have had a birthmark (or marks) on his head, and I cannot explain why he did not.

I also have no explanation for why Pappu had a supernumerary nipple. I have not undertaken in this work to explain *all* birthmarks, only some; and Pappu's birthmark is one about which I have nothing to say.

Comment on the Mistake in Identifying the Marks on Pappu

As I mentioned earlier, when Pappu first spoke about the previous life, he pointed toward his chest and said that he had been shot there. This does not mean that he pointed directly at the birthmark under his right nipple (the probable supernumerary nipple). At his young age when he began speaking about a previous life, he may not even have known that he had a birthmark in that location, although his parents had noticed it almost from his birth on. The prominence of this birthmark and the absence of any other on the chest understandably led his parents to attribute the birthmark to a wound in the previous life.

Lala Bhaiya's younger son, Ramesh Kumar, told us that when he first met Pappu, he pointed to the birthmark and asked Pappu: "What happened here?" Such a remark would inevitably lead to a further focusing of attention on the birthmark.

I believe that the adults concerned in the next two cases made a similar error: focusing too hastily on a mark that they noticed which was in the general direction of where the subject was pointing when he or she spoke about a previous life.

Comment on the Accuracy of Memories about the Previous Personality's Wound

I mentioned above that both of Lala Bhaiya's surviving sons remembered that he had been shot in the chest. The older (Raj Kumar) did not remember on which side of the chest he had been wounded. The younger (Ramesh Kumar), after saying that Pappu's birthmark corresponded to his father's wound, hesitated and said that he was not sure, but thought the wound had been on the left side of his father's chest.

If as investigators we had had only these statements as guides and no postmortem report, we might have been misled into affirming a correspondence that did not exist. (I well remember my surprise—and disappointment—

when I first studied the postmortem report in the case.) This mistake, however, would have been our own and not attributable to the cautious statements of our two informants.

THE CASE OF AMITHA HERATH

Summary of the Case and Its Investigation

Amitha Herath was born in Galgamuwa, Sri Lanka, on January 27, 1970. Her parents were H. M. Herath and his wife, W. M. Madumamanike. Amitha started to speak when she was about 1 year and 4 months old, and a few months later she began to talk about a previous life. As many subjects of these cases do, she contrasted what she considered her present surroundings with previous ones that seemed, on balance, inferior. For example, she noted that her home had a tile roof, whereas her previous home had one of thatch; in the previous home only the father had slept on a bed; but in her (present) home everyone had a bed. Amitha mentioned the place where she had lived—Nithalawa—and the names of several members of the family she remembered.

Giving further details of the previous life, Amitha said that she had wanted to prepare her (previous) father's lunch, had gone into the compound to pluck plantains, and had been bitten by a cobra on her foot. She then "came running here [meaning to her (present) family] on foot." (She was trying to indicate how she had been reborn into her family.)

As Amitha spoke about being bitten by a snake, she indicated the place where the snake had bitten her in the previous life—the outer aspect of her right foot, below the ankle.

In the usual way in these cases, word of Amitha's statements reached a family living in Nithalawa, which is about 7 kilometers from Amitha's home. This family had lost a young daughter, H. M. Muthumenike, who had died on May 4, 1968 after being bitten by a cobra in the compound of her family under exactly the circumstances Amitha had described. Muthumenike was not taken to a hospital, but was treated (by an Ayurvedic practitioner) at home, where she died 3 days after being bitten. She was 17 years old.

Muthumenike's older brother, H. M. Guneratne, and Amitha's mother had been classmates at school, and they had sometimes met each other casually afterward, although they had not exchanged social visits. Amitha's statements about the previous family included some information that her family members might have known normally. She also made some statements, however, of which they were certainly ignorant. For example, she correctly stated the particular dish of food that Muthumenike had been preparing for her father when she was bitten; and she referred by name to Muthumenike's boyfriend.

The two families met, and Muthumenike's family verified what Amitha had been saying about the previous life. Amitha was taken to Nithalawa, where she

recognized places familiar to Muthumenike, including the exact spot where the cobra had bitten Muthumenike. Afterward the families continued to exchange visits and were still doing so in 1982.

The case came to the attention of Godwin Samararatne in March 1976, and he began investigating it in November of that year. He continued interviewing members of both families during the following years. I joined the investigation in 1978 and again in 1980.

The Mark on Amitha's Foot

Amitha's mother, maternal grandmother, and maternal aunt all, with slight variations, agreed that within a few days of Amitha's birth they had noticed a birthmark under the outer aspect of her right ankle. Her grandmother remembered it as having two parts; her mother described it as a black circular patch. The adults who noticed the birthmark did not attach any significance to it until Amitha began to speak about the previous life. As she described being bitten by the cobra, she would point to the site, or at the area of this birthmark, which her elders now thought they understood.

The belief that this birthmark corresponded to the place where the snake had bitten Muthumenike became fixed in the minds of Amitha's family members, including Amitha herself. In December 1978, when I first met Amitha, she was nearly 9 years old. She pointed to the mentioned birthmark and distinguished it from two scars of postnatal lesions between which it lay. I sketched the lateral aspect of her right foot from her and her grandmother's indications (Figure 13-15). Tissa Jayawardene, who was with Godwin Samararatne and me, photographed the area. Figure 13-16 shows a small circular patch of hyperpigmentation inferior to the lateral malleolus, and on either side of it the two scarlike areas can also be seen.

Muthumenike's older brother, H. M. Guneratne, remembered in 1976 that the snake had bitten Muthumenike *near the toes* of her right foot, and he indicated this location on a sketch that Godwin Samararatne made.

During the years between 1976 and 1982, members of Muthumenike's family came to believe that she had been bitten at the back of the foot. In that year, when I interviewed H. M. Guneratne and his (and Muthumenike's) mother, they both said that the snake had bitten Muthumenike at the back of the foot near the ankle. (They now identified the foot as the *left* foot, and when I questioned them about this detail, they said that they had paid no attention to which foot had been bitten.)

Muthumenike's Death Certificate

In March 1984 we obtained a copy of Muthumenike's death certificate. It recorded her death as having occurred on May 4, 1968, at Nithalawa, and included the notation: "Died after a coma due to a poison by a cobra bite on the right foot near the little toe on the sole of the foot."

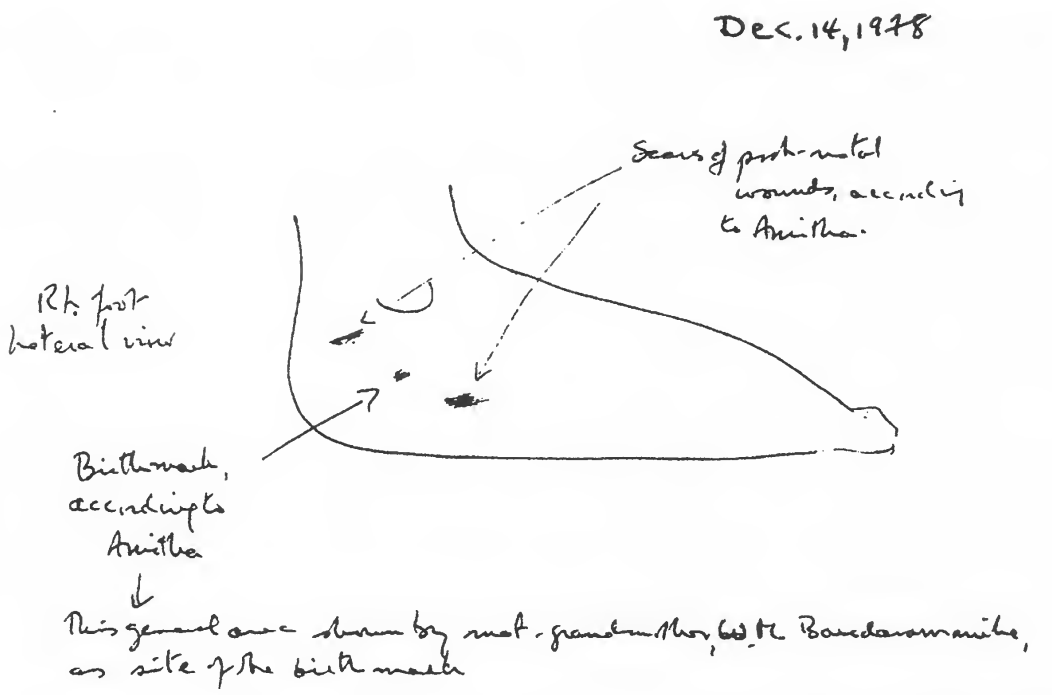
Dec. 14, 1978
Scars of post-natal wounds, according to Amitha
Rt. foot lateral view
Birthmark, according to Amitha
This general area shown by mat. grandmother, W. K. Bandaranaike, as site of the birthmark

Figure 13-15 Sketch of the lateral aspect of Amitha's right foot made in December 1978. The birthmark is indicated, inferior to the malleolus. On either side of it two scars of post-natal lesions are also shown.

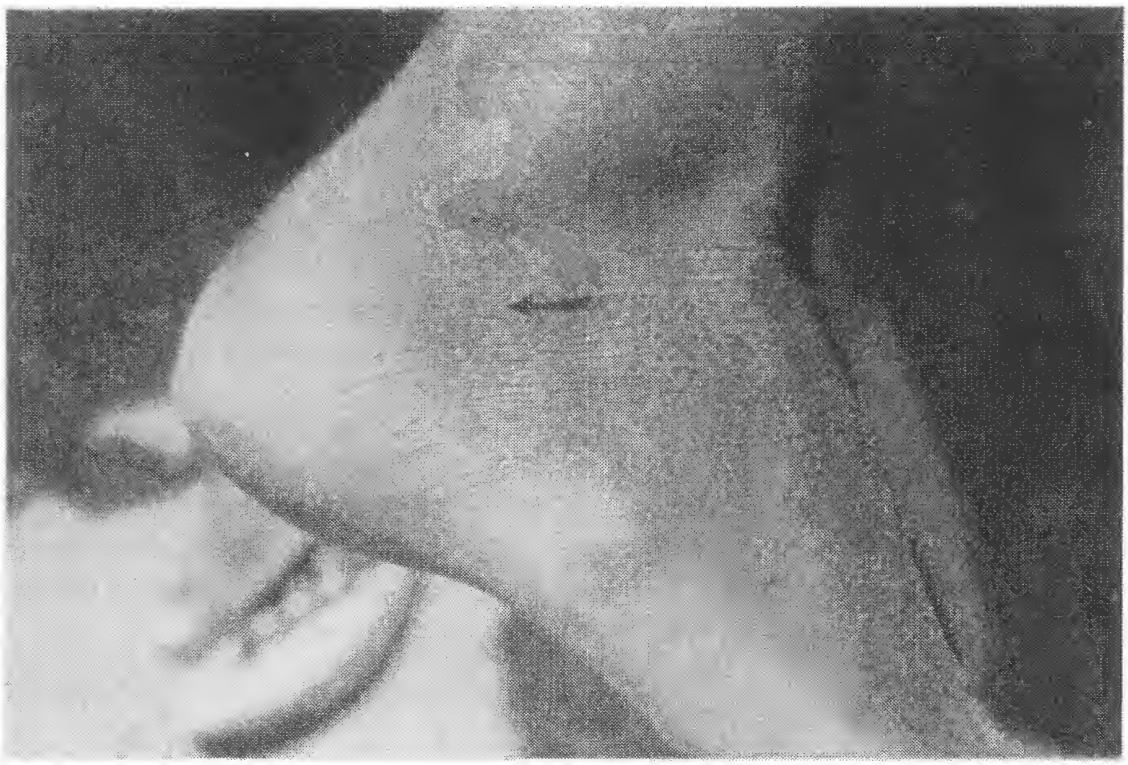

Figure 13-16 Lateral aspect of Amitha's right foot as it appeared in December 1978, when she was almost 9 years old. The birthmark (indicated by the arrow) and two scars of post-natal lesions indicated in Figure 13-15 are visible. The birthmark was a small circular area of hyperpigmentation, about 1 centimeter in diameter.

In Sri Lanka persons equivalent (more or less) to Coroners in the United Kingdom and Medical Examiners in the United States are known as "Inquirers into Sudden Deaths." A good many sudden deaths occur in Sri Lanka, and nearly every village has an Inquirer into them. They are not trained in medicine or the law, and some are no doubt careless and even corruptible. However, for the most part they appear to function well at their duties.

The Inquirer into Muthumenike's death filled out details for her death certificate on May 22, 1968, and there is no reason to imagine any motive for him to distort the facts in a case involving no criminal charges.

We may, however, doubt his accuracy and I did this. I learned in 1993 that the Inquirers into Sudden Death sometimes do not examine a dead body, but instead take a statement from a member of the family as to the cause of death. It occurred to me that this was a matter deserving further inquiry in the case of Amitha Herath. Accordingly, I asked Hector Samararatne to interview the Inquirer and surviving relatives of Muthumenike. He traveled to Galgamuwa early in 1994. The Inquirer had died, but Muthumenike's mother and (more importantly) her older brother, H. M. Guneratne, were alive and available. Hector Samararatne learned from them that the Inquirer had come to the house and examined Muthumenike's body. He did not, however, make any notes at the time. An interval of 18 days elapsed between Muthumenike's death and the completion of her death certificate. I thought that the Inquirer might have made a mistake in describing the location of the wound. I wrote to Professor Nandadasa Kodagoda, the leading forensic pathologist of Sri Lanka, about this possibility. In a letter dated April 11, 1994, he wrote: "...even if the Inquirer has examined the body personally, an inaccuracy could creep in either due to the excitement connected with the situation, or in the process of recording, particularly if such recording was done later. I have personally seen such instances." Moreover, the concordance between H. M. Guneratne's first memory of where the snake had bitten his sister and the death certificate suggests that one might have influenced the other. If, at Muthumenike's house, H. M. Guneratne had told the Inquirer (before he examined the body) that the bite had been near the toes, the Inquirer might have found and recorded what he was led to expect. This, however, is conjecture, and I must follow the rule I set of not discarding a medical document unless I have direct evidence of its falseness.

Comment on the Mistake in Identifying the Mark on Amitha

I do not think we should doubt that Amitha had a birthmark under the lateral malleolus of her right foot. It seems to have faded considerably, but some of it could still be seen in 1982, when she was 12 years old. Three well qualified persons said that they observed the mark soon after Amitha's birth. We are not, therefore, considering a mistake made in seizing upon the scar of a boil or insect bite when the child is already several years old. (An example of that kind of mistake seems to have occurred in the case of Vasantha Gunasekera and in the next case.)

Amitha's family at first attached no importance to the birthmark under her ankle. They only did this when she herself pointed to her foot. We shall never know whether Amitha also had a birthmark corresponding to the site of the snakebite, which later faded; probably she did not. Members of her family looked for one, however, and wrongly focused attention on the birthmark under the ankle of her right foot.

Comment on the Accuracy of Memories about the Previous Personality's Wound

H. M. Guneratne in 1976 accurately remembered the location of the bite on his sister's foot (to within a few centimeters). Six years later, which was 14 years after Muthumenike's death, his memory was wrong. Both he and his mother seemed to have come under the influence of Amitha and her family, so that their memories of the location of the bite conformed to her belief about the location of the bite in the previous life. They provided an example of the distorting effect that later, externally supplied information may have on memory (D. R. Davis and Sinha, 1950; E. F. Loftus, 1979).

As investigators we would not have been misled into believing that the birthmark on Amitha's foot corresponded to the bite on Muthumenike's foot if we had accepted Guneratne's statement of 1976, and if he had not later changed what he said.

THE CASE OF BRIJENDRA SINGH

Summary of the Case and Its Investigation

Brijendra Singh was born in January or February, 1964, in the village of Khajooria, District Mainpuri, Uttar Pradesh, India. His parents were Lakhan Singh and his wife, Shanti Devi. They had two younger children by the time we investigated this case. Lakhan Singh was a farmer of the village of Hussainpura, District Mainpuri, Uttar Pradesh. He and his wife were members of the Thakur subcaste. (Khajooria was Shanti Devi's village; she had returned there for Brijendra's birth.)

Shanti Devi said that when Brijendra was born he was observed to have a "big mark" on his left side. (Later, she was vague about the exact location of this birthmark, and I shall describe this difficulty later.) Brijendra's parents attached no significance to his birthmark until he began to speak about a previous life.

His parents disagreed about his age when he made his first reference to the previous life: His father and also a paternal aunt thought that he had been not more than 3 years old, but his mother said he was between 4 and 5. His first remembered reference occurred when a man called Lallan passed in or near Hussainpura, and Brijendra recognized him. He became angry, said that Lallan had struck him with a spear, and asked for a spear so that he could revenge him-

self on this man. (His mother said that Brijendra had actually tried to fetch his father's spear in order to kill Lallan, but this may have happened at a later encounter with Lallan.) After this incident, Brijendra communicated details of how in the life he was remembering he had become involved in a quarrel over irrigation water with other villagers. His brother had been with him. He had been speared and died. Brijendra also seems to have said, at times, that in the previous life he had been shot, as well as stabbed with a spear.

Brijendra's statements matched facts in the life of a Brahmin farmer called Raj Bahadur, who had lived in Dhobia, which is a hamlet about 0.5 kilometer from Hussainpura. He and his younger brother engaged in a scuffle over irrigation water with neighboring farmers. Lathis, spears, and at least one gun were used. Raj Bahadur was killed. One of the men implicated in his death was Bankey Lal, alias Lallan. Raj Bahadur was about 28 years old and unmarried when he died, on June 23, 1962.

Despite a difference in caste between them, Raj Bahadur and Lakhan Singh had been friendly. Raj Bahadur's mother, Chhoti, told us that he had once said to Lakhan Singh: "I come to your house when I am alive, and I will come when I am dead." (When we asked Lakhan Singh whether he could remember that Raj Bahadur had said this, he said that he could not.)

Brijendra met Chhoti and Raj Bahadur's younger brother, Dafedar. Chhoti believed that he had recognized her, but he seems to have been cued for this when they met. He was also said to have found his way unaided to Raj Bahadur's house in Dhobia, but he may have received some unconscious guidance for this also. More impressive was Brijendra's telling Dafedar about a valuable ornament that Raj Bahadur was known to have had at least up to the day before his death. This ornament could not be found after his death. Dafedar asked Brijendra where it was, and Brijendra said that he (as Raj Bahadur) had pawned it. Brijendra could not remember the pawnbroker's name, but there were only a few pawnbrokers in the nearby town of Bewar. Dafedar went to the market in Bewar, inquired of the several pawnbrokers there about the ornament he believed Raj Bahadur had pawned, and recovered it. If the family had known earlier that the ornament had been pawned, they would have got it back.

Following these initial meetings, Brijendra continued to visit Raj Bahadur's family in Dhobia, and Dafedar came to see him in Hussainpura. The visits, which indicated a complete acceptance of Brijendra's claim to be Raj Bahadur reborn, continued until 1975.

Brijendra showed a touch of Brahmin snobbery in disliking to eat off plates used by others. He also would not take water from glasses used by Thakurs outside his family. He explained his stance on these matters by saying: "I am a Brahmin."

This case came to the attention of Balram Shastri, the tehsildar and part-time journalist whose interest in these cases I have already mentioned. He made some enquiries about the case and wrote a report of it, which I believe he never published. He gave a copy of the report to an assistant who was working for me in

India at the time, and she translated it for me. The information in the report enabled Dr. Satwant Pasricha to trace the case. She began investigating it in May 1975. Accompanied by K. S. Yadav, she went to Hussainpura and interviewed Brijendra and his parents. At this time Brijendra was 11 years old, and he said that he could still remember some details of the previous life.

In October 1976, Dr. Pasricha and I (accompanied by Dr. David Barker) returned to Hussainpura, where we had further interviews with Brijendra and his parents. We also had a long interview in Dhobia with Raj Bahadur's mother, Chhoti, and a brief one with one of his cousins.

The Search for the Postmortem Report on Raj Bahadur. We had more difficulty in finding the postmortem report in this case than in any other that I can recall. To illustrate our determination to obtain medical documents whenever possible I will digress to describe the efforts we took in the present case.

The informants at Hussainpura and Dhobia thought that Raj Bahadur had been killed in 1962, but they were ignorant or vague about the exact date. Shanti Devi, who had been at her village when Raj Bahadur had been killed and learned about it only later, thought that he had died in December 1962 or January 1963. Raj Bahadur's mother, Chhoti, placed his death in June or July 1962, which proved correct.

Dr. Pasricha and I thought that we could locate the report of the postmortem examination of Raj Bahadur at the Mainpuri District Hospital, where, Chhoti had told us, the examination had been made. On November 2, 1976, we searched through all the records of postmortem examinations at the hospital for the years 1962-1963, but without success.

The next year, thinking that we might not have been thorough enough, we returned to the hospital, and on October 27, 1977, we examined all the reports that we could find in the record room of the hospital for the years 1961 through 1964. These were abundant, because the region had a high rate of homicide.[7] Although we must have gone over about 300 postmortem reports, we did not find the one for Raj Bahadur.

We then changed our tactics and tried to obtain a more precise date for Raj Bahadur's death. This involved a search through the Crime Register at the Bewar Police Station. On October 23, 1979, we succeeded in finding the report of the incident which gave the date as June 23, 1962. On the following day we returned to the Mainpuri District Hospital and searched—now for the third time—with even more thoroughness in the records around the date we had obtained for Raj Bahadur's murder. (Postmortem examinations ordinarily take place within a day or two of a murder.) This search was also unavailing, and we concluded that the hospital's copy of the record had been lost—possibly borrowed by a lawyer concerned in the trial of accused persons and never returned.

Copies of reports of postmortem examinations are usually incorporated in court records of criminal trials. Dr. Pasricha tried this resource, and on November

[7]Other cases in this work from the area of Bewar and Bhongaon involving homicides include those of Sunita Singh, Juggi Lal Agarwal, Punkaj Chauhan, and Bhopal Singh.

29, 1979, our patience was finally rewarded when Dr. Pasricha examined and copied from the records of the District Court in Mainpuri both the judge's judgment in the case against the persons accused of killing Raj Bahadur and the postmortem examination of Raj Bahadur.

Brijendra's Birthmark

In 1975 Shanti Devi said that Brijendra's birthmark had been on "the left side," but she and her sister-in-law (Lakhan Singh's sister) then disagreed as to where the birthmark was located.

In 1976 we asked Shanti Devi to show us where the mark was, and she pointed to an area lateral to Brijendra's left nipple, on the side of his chest. I could distinguish some faint marks there, but they were so indistinct that no abnormality showed on the photographs that I took.

The Report of the Postmortem on Raj Bahadur

The pathologist who examined Raj Bahadur's body stated:

1. Stab wound ½ inch by ¼ inch chest cavity deep on the left side [of the] chest situated in the second intercostal space in the upper part near the left border of the sternum and 1¼ inches away and to the left of [the] midsternal line....
2. ...pleura was penetrated under the injury on [the] left medial border. The pericardium was also punctured at the uppermost part under the sternum and the [external] injury [mentioned above]....The ascending aorta was penetrated through and through at its anteromedial and posterolateral walls....The superior vena cava was also punctured in its medial wall ⅛inch in length....
3. Death was caused by shock and hemorrhage due to [a] stab wound of the chest resulting in penetration of the pericardium, ascending aorta, and superior vena cava....the injury could not be caused by any firearm, but would be caused by [an] edged sharp and pointed weapon.

The pathologist probably knew that a firearm had been fired during the scuffle at which Raj Bahadur had been killed. The use of firearms was noted in the Crime Register at Bewar and also in the judge's judgment at the later trial. It was, therefore, important for any defendant accused of using a firearm that Raj Bahadur did not die from a gunshot wound.

Comment on the Discrepancy between the Mark Indicated to Us and the Wound on Raj Bahadur

Although the faint marks to which Shanti Devi pointed in 1976 were on the same side of the chest (the left side) as the fatal wound in Raj Bahadur, they were

at least 15 centimeters from the location of that wound—beyond the limit I set for a satisfactory correspondence of location.

Our mistake in this case occurred in 1976, when we accepted Shanti Devi's indication of a mark as showing the relevant birthmark, even though the year before, in 1975, she and her sister-in-law had disagreed about the location of the mark. If Brijendra had had a birthmark at the site of Raj Bahadur's wound, it had completely faded by 1975 and 1976, when he was 11 and 12 years old. The mark was almost certainly faint to begin with, even though it may have been "big." I say this because Brijendra, unlike many subjects of these cases, seems never to have pointed to it himself at any time. In 1976 he said that he remembered being struck in the previous life with a spear, but he could not say in what part of the body he had been wounded.

Although I have listed in Category B2 of Table 13-1 five cases in which birthmarks that had faded did correspond closely with wounds recorded in post-mortem reports (and the case of Semihe Atasoy exemplifies such cases), I think that, in general, we should set aside reports of birthmarks that have faded by the time an investigation begins.

THE CASE OF PAPPU TIWARI

Summary of the Case and Its Investigation

Pappu Tiwari was born in the village of Rev, District Jhansi, Uttar Pradesh, India, on (probably) August 23, 1973. His parents were Awadh Tiwari and his wife, Shanti Devi. They were Brahmins. Awadh Tiwari was a small farmer.

According to Pappu's mother, he was born with a prominent birthmark on the left side of his forehead extending onto the frontal part of his head, about 6.5 centimeters long. After Pappu became able to speak, at the age of about 2½ years, he began to protest at being called "Pappu." He said: "Don't call me Pappu. Call me Vakil Sahib." The word *vakil* means "lawyer" or "advocate" in Hindi, and so Pappu was asked what vakil he was. He replied: "Prabhu Dayal Vakil." He also said that he was from Moth (a small town 5 kilometers from Rev) and that he had been killed by goondas (hired murderers).

Pappu's statements matched the life of a lawyer of Moth called Prabhu Dayal who had been murdered in 1970. Prabhu Dayal's death had at first been attributed to an accident. His body was found between the front and rear wheel of a Jeep, and persons with him gave out that he had fallen from the Jeep. However, this story did not accord either with the injuries on Prabhu Dayal's body or with the direction of the flow of blood on his clothes. He must have been bludgeoned on the head with a blunt instrument of some kind. (Pappu's statement that he had been struck on the head with a car jack is plausible.) The murderers probably inflicted the injuries on the legs as part of the simulation of an accident.

Awadh Tiwari had learned of Prabhu Dayal's sensational murder, but had not previously known of him; and the two families had had no acquaintance before the case developed.

Pappu met members of Prabhu Dayal's family and convinced them that he was Prabhu Dayal reborn. He strongly identified himself with Prabhu Dayal, and when he first registered for school, he gave his name as "Prabhu Dayal Vakil." He was given the nickname "Vakil."

Dr. Satwant Pasricha learned of this case through a relative who had read a newspaper account of it. She began investigating it and in November 1981 conducted interviews with members of the two families concerned. In February 1983, I joined Dr. Pasricha in some further interviews. At this stage we were able to obtain copies of the report of the postmortem on the body of Prabhu Dayal.

Pappu's Birthmark

By the time of our investigation of the case the birthmark on Pappu's head had completely faded; we could see nothing at the site where Shanti Devi indicated it had been. She distinctly remembered that the birthmark had been above the *left* eyebrow.

Pappu had a birth defect of the left arm. An area about 5-6 centimeters in diameter on the lateral aspect of the middle of the upper arm was depressed in a hollow, which, at its deepest was about 1 centimeter below the surrounding normal part of the arm.

The Report of the Postmortem on Prabhu Dayal

The report stated:

> The deceased sustained the following injuries:
> 1. Lacerated wound on the forehead on the right side spreading to scalp behind the right ear. Size 2½ inches by ¼ inch.
>
> ....fracture of the following bones of the skull on the right side: frontal bone, parietal bone, temporal bone. These fractures of the bones damaged the brain tissues.

The report also mentioned a hematoma on the left thigh and multiple bruises on the right thigh. It mentioned no injury to the left upper arm.

Comment on the Discrepancy between the Place Indicated for a Faded Birthmark and the Major Wound on Prabhu Dayal

The most common source of error in testimony for these cases is confusion between left and right. (I discuss this topic further later in this chapter.) Shanti Devi may have forgotten on which side of Pappu's head the faded birthmark had

been. A shift of the birthmark across the midline is extremely unlikely—I could almost say impossible.

The case further illustrates the potentiality for error in accepting into the data of a case the report of a birthmark that is said to have faded.

THE CASE OF SUWA BILAT

Summary of the Case and Its Investigation

Suwa Bilat was born in the village of Ratadiya in District Pali, Rajasthan, India. His father gave his birthdate as November 11, 1952, but told us that this date might be wrong by as much as 2 years, earlier or later. Suwa's parents were Aidu Bilat and his wife, Phepi. Suwa was the sixth child and oldest son in a family that eventually had eight children. Aidu Bilat was a farmer at the time we investigated the case; earlier he had served in the Indian Army; and he had also at one time had a shop in the village.

When Suwa was born, he was found to have numerous birthmarks. Some of these had faded by the time we investigated the case, but two prominent ones remained at the back of his neck and on his right leg.

Suwa was about 2 years old when he began to speak clearly, and almost immediately he started referring to a previous life. He said that he had been called Maida and that his brothers, Nimba and Moti, had killed him with an axe. A man called Maida had been killed, probably before Suwa's birth, by his brothers, Nimba and Moti. Suwa's family and that of Maida were residents of the village area of Ratadiya, which consists of several hamlets somewhat spread out. Maida's family lived in the hamlet of Kanecha and Suwa's in that of Jala Bera. They are about 2 kilometers apart. Suwa recognized some members of Maida's family, and he also expressed anger and intentions of revenging himself whenever he saw Moti and Nimba.

The case came to the attention of Dr. K.S. Rawat of Beawar (the nearest town to Ratadiya). He learned about it in 1985 and made a preliminary investigation of it at the end of that year. He informed me about the case and sent me a photograph of the large birthmark at the back of Suwa's neck.

On February 13, 1987, Dr. Pasricha and I (with Dr. Rawat) went to Ratadiya, where we interviewed Suwa and his father, Aidu. One of Suwa's cousins was present at these interviews, but contributed little information. Suwa's mother had died before 1987. We tried to interview two other informants who seemed important, but neither was available.

Dr. Rawat continued the investigation and sent me notes of an interview he had with Suwa's older sister Dhanni in March 1988. He also sent notes of an interview that Mrs. K.S. Rawat had had with Badami, the midwife who had delivered Suwa. (Indian women, especially of the older generations, talk unwillingly with men who are strangers to them, but will often talk with other women.)

The information that we then had warranted a search for the postmortem report on Maida, and Dr. Rawat thought that he could obtain this from places accessible to him from Beawar. He was unable to do this, and the case remained without further investigation until March 1990, when Dr. Pasricha took up the search for the postmortem record and finally found it in the judicial archives at Jodhpur, which is a major administrative center for western Rajasthan. One of the more important items of information in the postmortem report was a definite date for Maida's death: March 28, 1953. The report showed a concordance between the still visible birthmark on Suwa's leg and a wound on Maida; but it also showed an important discrepancy in appearance between the birthmark on the back of Suwa's neck and a wound recorded on the back of Maida's neck.

This last discrepancy made me think again about the vagueness in Aidu's memory of the year of Suwa's birth. As I mentioned, when he told us in 1987 that Suwa was born in 1952, he acknowledged that that date might be off by as much as 2 years in either direction. He had, however, asserted that Suwa was born 9 months after Maida's death. To accept 1952 as the year of Suwa's birth entails believing that Suwa was born before Maida died. This was not an impossibility, and I shall discuss it further later.

As I mentioned earlier, we had missed meeting two potentially valuable informants in 1987. We had interviewed no member of Maida's family, and we ourselves (Dr. Pasricha and I) had interviewed only Suwa and his father. By 1990 I had attenuated my trips to India, mainly in order to complete this monograph. I saw no way in which we could extend our investigation of the case. Accordingly, I decided its investigation was incomplete and placed it in Category C of Table 13-1.

The study of the case languished then for 3 years. Early in 1994 I made another brief trip for investigations in India with Dr. Pasricha. Among other cases we discussed that of Suwa. Dr. Pasricha had planned to continue the investigations after I returned to the United States, and we agreed that she would make an effort to return to Ratadiya in order to fill the gaps in our information, if she could. In February 1994, she was able to go to Ratadiya again, and she interviewed four additional informants. The most important of these were Maida's daughter, Ganga, and Nimba's wife, Chamari. Dr. Pasricha learned that Aidu had died in 1991; and Suwa had also died, in April 1992. He died after an extremely brief illness of less than 2 days. He vomited blood, but Dr. Pasricha did not learn of other symptoms he must have had. Maida's wife had remarried and left the area of Ratadiya.

Dr. Pasricha's interviews of 1994 convinced her that Suwa was born *after* Maida's death. I have some reservations about this conclusion and will return to them later. We certainly cannot, however, positively affirm that Suwa was born *before* Maida died. The discrepancy between the wound on Maida's neck and the birthmark on Suwa's neck remains; and I believe this case must be placed among those with an important discordance between the record of the postmortem and the birthmark (Category D of Table 13-1).

The Life and Death of Maida

Maida Pokariya was born in about 1900. He was the oldest of the four sons of his parents, Jala and Sapan. They had two younger daughters. His brothers were called Nimba, Mangala, and Moti. They lived in the hamlet of Kanecha within the larger village area of Ratadiya.

In adulthood Maida married Jhamkoo and they had one child, a girl called Ganga. Maida worked mainly as a farmer.

Early in 1953 Maida quarreled with Nimba and Moti about family land, and Nimba and Moti decided to kill Maida. According to the transcript of their later trial, they ambushed Maida during the night of March 28, 1953, attacking him with an axe and a lathi. Maida's call for help or his groans attracted attention, and he was taken to his home in Kanecha, where he died a few hours later. Before he died, he made a statement declaring that Nimba and Moti had attacked him.

A witness saw Nimba and Moti running away from where Maida was lying. They were duly arrested, tried, and convicted. After a term in prison, they were released and returned to Ratadiya.

The Postmortem Examination of Maida. The physician who examined Maida's body recorded ten wounds. Most of these were bruises without any correspondence to birthmarks that were still visible in 1987. The most important wound, numbered (1) by the pathologist, was recorded as a "lacerated wound 2 inches by 1 inch and bone deep with compound fracture of the skull bone on the frontal prominence right." (Death was attributed to this wound.) In addition, the report noted three other wounds relevant to Suwa's case. These were: (5), a "bruise with swelling 2 inches by a ½ inch on posterior part of the neck *transverse* in direction" (my italics); (8) "three bruises of the size ½ inch by ⅜ inches, 2 inches by ½ inch, 2 inches by ½ inch on the left leg anterior aspect along the bone in the middle two thirds part"; and (9) "two bruises 2 inches by 2 inches on the right leg in the middle two third part anterior aspect along the bone."

Statements and Recognitions Made by Suwa

As a child Suwa said that he was Maida and that Nimba and Moti had murdered him with an axe. He further said that he had been carrying wood on his shoulders, going to Beawar. It was nighttime, 4 o'clock in the morning, when his brothers attacked him.

As Suwa spoke about how, in the previous life, he had been murdered, he would point to various parts of his body. His older sister Dhanni remembered that he pointed to his neck and forearms.

Suwa's statements were accurate (according to the report of the trial of Moti and Nimba), although the trial record gave the time of the attack as occurring at 6:00 a.m., not 4:00 a.m.

Suwa's Statements in 1987. In 1987 Suwa was 35 years old—more or less—and unlike most subjects of these cases he said that he still remembered the

previous life. He repeated what other informants told us and added some additional details, such as that he (as Maida) had climbed a tree when he saw his brothers approaching him with weapons; but they climbed after him.

Comment. The murder of Maida was a well-known event in the village and nothing Suwa said in 1987 would have been outside his normal knowledge.

Recognitions Made by Suwa. Suwa's first recognitions of persons connected with the previous life occurred when he saw Moti and Nimba at his family's shop, where they had come to make purchases. Suwa's older sister Dhanni said that Suwa recognized "everybody" of Maida's family, but she did not describe the circumstances of these recognitions.

Maida's daughter, Ganga, said that Suwa told her: "You are my daughter and I am your father."

Suwa's Behavior Related to the Previous Life

Suwa's statements about the previous life began when he objected to the family allowing Nimba and Moti to come into the family shop. The sight of Moti and Nimba seems to have stimulated his memories more than anything else. He also expressed an intention to revenge himself on them. On more than one occasion he seized a stick and, menacing them with it, angrily asked: "Why have you come here?" When Suwa first showed this hostility toward Nimba and Moti, his family did not understand his behavior, because at that stage Suwa had not expressed verbally any memories of Maida's life and death. (Later, fear that Moti and Nimba might kill Suwa led his family to try to suppress his memories of the previous life.)

Suwa definitely regarded Ganga as his daughter and called her "daughter." He sometimes asked her to come and stay with him.

In middle adulthood, that is, when we met him in 1987, Suwa said he was apt to remember the previous life when he saw Moti and Nimba. He said that he still became angry when he thought of Maida's murderers, but he no longer had thoughts of vengeance against them. He greeted them when he happened to see them in the village.

Moti died in about 1990. Suwa did not attend the usual condolence meeting, saying: "I am not going because he killed me."

The Interval between Maida's Death and Suwa's Birth

In 1987 Aidu recalled that he had come home from leave on the day Maida was killed. He also stated that Suwa was born 9 months later. Gulabi, Suwa's paternal aunt, also said that Suwa was born 9 months after Maida's death, and so did Ganga, Maida's daughter. One other informant (for Dr. Pasricha), who was not a member of either family, placed Suwa's birth as occurring 10-11 months after Maida's death.

Comment. In the area of Ratadiya there appears to be a general belief that rebirth should occur 9 months after a person's death. The Jains, who are numerous

in western Rajasthan, believe that the interval between death and reincarnation should be—some of them would say *must* be—9 months after death; but I am unfamiliar with a similar belief among Hindus apart from those of Ratadiya. The importance of a rigidly held belief about what should occur lies in the possibility that memories may become adapted to suit expectations.

Suwa's Birthmarks

Badami, the midwife who delivered Suwa, said that she noticed birthmarks on Suwa immediately after his birth. She could not remember precise locations of the birthmarks, but said they were "almost all over his body." They were red.

Suwa's older sister Dhanni said that he had birthmarks "on his neck and hands, etc.". The "etc." implied her forgetfulness of other locations.

Aidu remembered Suwa as having birthmarks on the "back of the neck, backs of both hands, left ear, left thigh inside." They were not bleeding or oozing when Suwa was born. Aidu said that Suwa had smallpox when he was about 5 years old and the birthmarks had faded after that illness.

In 1987 Suwa had four visible birthmarks. The most prominent was that on the back of his neck (Figure 13-17). In location it corresponded to the bruise (5) of the postmortem report on Maida; but it did not correspond in appearance, because its principal direction was not transverse, but vertical. A birthmark on Suwa's right thigh (Figure 13-18) may have corresponded to wound (9) of the postmortem report. The birthmark on the left leg that Aidu described had faded before 1987; but it could be said to correspond in location to wound (8) of the postmortem report. (I wish that the pathologist had located the wounds on the legs more precisely than he did, but I believe the correspondences may be allowed.)

I could see no birthmark on Suwa's ear, and no informant reported any abnormality on the right frontal area of Suwa's head that might have corresponded to the fractured skull in that location, which had been Maida's fatal wound. Suwa had two small birthmarks on the backs of each hand, but these corresponded to nothing in the postmortem report.

Comment. In other case reports of this monograph I have noted in some cases that the body of the previous personality had more wounds than the subject had birthmarks. In Chapter 14 I discuss a possible explanation for this: The victim of a murder or accident may be stunned and lose consciousness from early wounds (which have correspondences in birthmarks), whereas later wounds made when consciousness is impaired may not impinge so much on the dying person's mind and consequently will generate no birthmarks.

Possible Interpretations of the Discrepancy Involving the Wound and Birthmark of the Neck

Not accepting that the birthmark on Suwa's neck occurred "just by chance," I prefer one or the other of two explanations that do not involve the concept of chance.

Figure 13-17 Birthmark at the back of Suwa Bilat's neck as it appeared in 1987, when he was about 35 years old. The birthmark was a linear, vertically oriented area of hypopigmentation with a well-defined right edge and an irregular left edge. It was about 2 centimeters wide and 11 centimeters long.

Figure 13-18 Birthmark on the antero-medial aspect of Suwa Bilat's right leg. The birthmark was a scarlike area of hypopigmentation measuring about 4-5 centimeters in length and 1 centimeter in width.

Possible Clerical Error in the Postmortem Report. The postmortem report that we have derives from the typed transcript of the trial, in March 1954, of Nimba and Moti for the murder of Maida. At some stage the pathologist's report was copied into the typed record of the trial. In 1954 the proceedings of the trial would have been taken down by a stenographer (not tape-recorded) and later transcribed. We have not seen in this case, as we have in many others, the original record of the postmortem; instead, we have a summary within the judgment from the trial record. I can imagine that in the processes of stenography and copying, a negligent clerk could have heard or read *vertical* (in the doctor's report) and written *transverse* in his copy. We have no evidence that this actually happened, but it is conjecturable.

Parakayapravesh. This Sanskrit word designates the taking over of a living body, after its birth, by a personality not the original owner of the body. The literal translation of the word is "entering another body." The word is usually translated by the English word *possession.* Cases of this type occur from time to time in India and elsewhere. My colleagues and I have published reports of two such cases in India (Stevenson, 1966/1974b; Stevenson, Pasricha, and McClean-Rice, 1989) and one in Thailand (Stevenson, 1983). I have investigated several other cases of the type and plan to publish reports of another three in a forthcoming work. In one of these still unpublished cases, I was led to question the subject's year of birth by noting a discrepancy between the subject's birthmarks and the wounds recorded in a postmortem of the person of whose life the subject had memories; this led to the finding, on further inquiry, that beyond doubt the subject had been born about 4 months before the previous personality had died.

In many of the cases of this type the subject whose body becomes "possessed" is seriously ill and even thought close to death at the time of the "entering in" of the deceased personality. In one of the still unpublished cases, however, the subject, a girl a little over 3 years of age, appeared in good health when she suddenly began to speak about a previous life as another young girl, who, it turned out, had died about 6 months before the subject began to speak accurately about this second girl's life. The subject became ill *after* she underwent the change in personality, but the illness may have been an effect of her memories, not its cause.

I mention this last case because of the firm assurance of Suwa's aunt that he had never been ill during his infancy. Her testimony may be doubted, however, because she insisted that Suwa had never had a day of illness in his life before his brief, terminal illness in 1992; she had entirely forgotten about Suwa's having had smallpox (according to Aidu) at the age of 5.

Aidu's year for Suwa's birth, 1952, clearly harmonizes with the interpretation of parakayapravesh, because Maida unmistakably did not die until March 28, 1953, when Suwa, on Aidu's account, would have been perhaps 15-18 months old. Although one informant (Suwa's older sister) said that Suwa started to speak about the previous life as early as 11 months, Aidu and two other informants said that he did not speak about it until between 1.5 and 3 years of age. On the other hand, the firm statements of three informants (again including Aidu) that Suwa was born 9 or more months *after* Maida's death does not support the interpretation of parakayapravesh.

If parakayapravesh is the correct interpretation of the case, we have to suppose that the birthmarks on Suwa's body derived from wounds on some deceased person other than Maida. Maida's personality would then have possessed Suwa's body during Suwa's infancy, either during an unremembered illness or perhaps during no illness whatever.

I am unable to decide between the two explanations I have suggested. Knowing that its main events occurred nearly 35 years before we went to Ratadiya for the first time, I probably should not have begun the investigation of this case. Yet once we had obtained a postmortem report and additional information, I could not omit a report of it in this work.

THE CASE OF RAM TIRATH SHARMA

Introduction

This case included the puzzling feature that the subject said, from age 2 to 13, that in a previous life he had died after being gored by a bull (which explained his birthmark), and then at age 13 he changed his statement and said that the goring by a bull had occurred many years before his death. In all other features the case conformed to the "standard" case of northern India. In this report I shall concentrate on the different statements that Ram Tirath made about the death in the previous life.

Summary of the Case and Its Investigation

Ram Tirath Sharma was born in the village of Sanjarpur, District Budaun, Uttar Pradesh, India, in October 1961. His parents were Beni Ram Sharma and his wife, Premwati Devi. They were Brahmins. Ram Tirath had one older sister, and he may have had other siblings about whom I did not learn. Beni Ram was a schoolteacher.

At Ram Tirath's birth he was found to have a birthmark on his right chest (Figure 13-19), but his parents attached no significance to it until later.

Ram Tirath began speaking coherently at the age of about 2 years and immediately started to talk about a previous life. He opened by saying to his parents: "I want to say something. Please listen. I belong to Gadditola, Ujhani." Ram Tirath then stated further details about the previous life, including the name, Man Singh, of the man whose life he was remembering and his caste, Murau (cultivators, mainly of vegetables). He said that he had been gored by a bull and had died about 10 days later. Ram Tirath gave this information partly spontaneously and partly in response to his parents' questions.

Ujhani is a medium-sized town of the Budaun District about 5 kilometers from Sanjarpur, and it has a mohalla (quarter) known as Gadditola. Ram Tirath wanted to go to "his" home there, and Beni Ram eventually decided to take him. By this time Ram Tirath was about 3½ years old. Beni Ram put Ram Tirath down

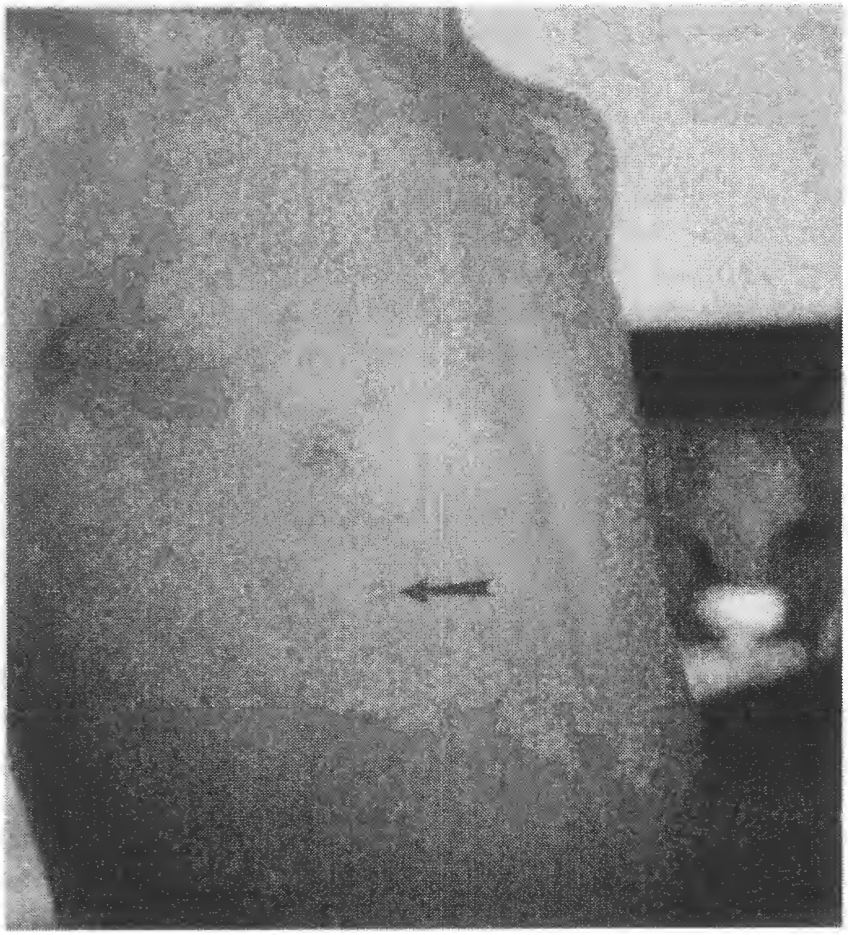

Figure 13-19 Ram Tirath Sharma's birthmark as it appeared in November 1971, when he was 10 years old. The birthmark was a round, slightly elevated area of hyperpigmentation, about 3 millimeters in diameter. It was located about 6 centimeters inferior to the right nipple, in the milkline, and it may have been a supernumerary nipple.

in the market at Ujhani and followed him along the lanes until he stopped and said: "This is my house." Upon enquiring at the house, Beni Ram learned that a man called Man Singh had lived there. Man Singh's sons and their families still occupied the house. They were vegetable growers.

The two families had had no previous acquaintance before this meeting so far as they were aware. Beni Ram said that he purchased vegetables in Ujhani, and so some commercial contact between the families could not be excluded. Certainly, however, he was not familiar with the family to which Ram Tirath led him.

At Man Singh's house, Ram Tirath recognized two of Man Singh's sons, a daughter, and several neighbors. According to Beni Ram, Man Singh's oldest son, Kishen Lal, verified all Ram Tirath's statements as correct.

I learned of this case in 1971 from an informant in Bareilly, a city of Uttar Pradesh that I used as my base for investigating cases in its region. In November of that year, accompanied by Dr. L. P. Mehrotra, I was able to meet Ram Tirath

and his father at a village called Hazratganj, which is on the main road between Budaun and another large town of the Budaun District called Sahaswan. Sanjarpur is about 2 kilometers from Hazratganj, away from the highway. At Hazratganj, Kailash Kumar Singh, a prominent landowner of the area, kindly enabled us to meet Ram Tirath and his father at his (Kailash Kumar Singh's) house. Ram Tirath was then about 10 years old. He said that he still remembered the previous life, and he mentioned to us a number of its details, including how it had ended when a bull had gored Man Singh.

Hazratganj and Sanjarpur are deep in the interior of Uttar Pradesh, and I offer that fact as my explanation, or excuse, for not having begun the work of independent verification in 1971. I did not meet Kishen Lal until October 1974. At that time (accompanied by Dr. Mehrotra again and also by Dr. Satwant Pasricha) I went to Gadditola, Ujhani, and had a long interview with Kishen Lal. Kishen Lal's younger brother, Hardial, was not available, but we met another man who had known Man Singh and whom Ram Tirath had earlier recognized, albeit somewhat indirectly. We also that year had a long interview at Sanjarpur with Ram Tirath's mother, Premwati Devi. (Beni Ram was away on the occasion of this visit to Sanjarpur.)

Kishen Lal verified all but two details of what Ram Tirath had said about the previous life, and he was convinced that Ram Tirath was his father reincarnated. He seems to have been particularly impressed by Ram Tirath's recognitions of members of Man Singh's family.

One detail he thought wrong was Ram Tirath's statement that in the previous life he had sold vegetables at Sanjarpur (which Ram Tirath thought accounted for his birth there). Kishen Lal said that his father had not been on that side of Ujhani; but he may not have known everything about his father's movements, and Kailash Kumar Singh thought it quite likely that Man Singh had come over to Sanjarpur to sell vegetables.

The other detail Kishen Lal did not verify was more important. He said that Man Singh had died after a brief illness with fever. He knew nothing about his ever having been gored by a bull. At Ram Tirath's visit to Ujhani and during a subsequent visit to Sanjarpur by Kishen Lal, nothing had been said about Ram Tirath's birthmark.

At this stage Dr. Pasricha and I were baffled, because Beni Ram in 1971 had told me that Kishen Lal had confirmed to him the correctness of Ram Tirath's statement about dying after being gored by a bull. Moreover, Premwati Devi (in 1974, in the absence of her husband) also said that Kishen Lal had verified this detail when he and other members of Man Singh's family had come to visit Ram Tirath at Sanjarpur.

Kailash Kumar Singh, at whose home we had conducted our interviews in 1971, had learned that Kishen Lal's son had become friendly with Ram Tirath and had then become arrogant and shiftless. Kishen Lal blamed Ram Tirath for his son's waywardness, and Kailash Kumar Singh surmised that perhaps Kishen Lal wished to discredit Ram Tirath by sapping at the foundations of his claim to be Man Singh reborn. Other than this somewhat tenuous speculation, we had no reason to think that Kishen Lal wanted to damage the case, and his statements to us indicated the opposite.

As we concluded the work of 1974, Kailash Kumar Singh volunteered to make discreet enquiries through people he knew in the area about any motives among the persons involved in the case that might influence them to distort or falsify their statements about it.

In April 1975, Dr. Pasricha (with Dr. Jamuna Prasad) returned to Hazratganj to learn what information Kailash Kumar Singh had obtained. He said that in the meantime he had talked with Ram Tirath, who had repeated to him that he had been gored by a bull in the previous life. This time, however, Ram Tirath said that the goring had occurred many years before Man Singh had died, when his children were still young. He attributed his birthmark to the goring, which had left a scar on Man Singh. Beni Ram was present at Hazratganj in 1975 when Ram Tirath changed his statement about the goring by a bull; and he changed his statement also and told Kailash Kumar Singh that Ram Tirath had spoken of being gored by a bull, but long before death in the previous life.

Our next move was to meet Ram Tirath himself again. In the meantime, he had gone to a place called Bahura in District Etah. He was attending secondary school near there while living with his older, married sister. Dr. Pasricha was able to meet him at his school in May 1975. Ram Tirath, who was 13 years old by this time, said that his memories of the previous life were still strong and that he "remembered everything." When Dr. Pasricha asked him about the episode of bull-goring, he repeated what he had told Kailash Kumar Singh: that Man Singh had been gored by a bull when his children were young and that a scar had remained and his birthmark corresponded to the scar. Ram Tirath said nothing about having earlier said that Man Singh had died after being gored by a bull, and Dr. Pasricha did not confront him with the change in his statement about the death in the previous life.

This change, however, brought us back once more to Kishen Lal, whom Dr. Pasricha and I met again in October 1975. He now said that he had learned from someone that his father had been gored by a bull when he (Man Singh) was a child. He could not, however, remember who had told him this; it was secondhand testimony, and when someone in the crowd of onlookers at the interview cautioned him against making such statements, he withdrew what he had said.

Other Information

Ram Tirath said that between the death of Man Singh and his birth he had another terrestrial life that had lasted 3 to 4 years. He gave no details of this "intermediate life."

Ram Tirath also spoke about encounters in a realm of discarnate beings where he met a baba (holy man) who advised him about being reborn.

In relation to the life of Man Singh, Ram Tirath showed some behavior that accorded with his statements.

I give no details about any of the above three features and mention them here only to emphasize the similarity of the case, in many respects, to other cases of northern India.

Ram Tirath's Birthmark

Figure 13-19 shows the location of Ram Tirath's birthmark on his right chest about 6 centimeters below the right nipple. It was a small round area of hyperpigmentation, about 3 millimeters in diameter and slightly raised. It was in the milkline and could have been a supernumerary nipple.

The birthmark was not discharging when Ram Tirath was born.

Beni Ram Sharma said that it had not changed in (comparative) size since Ram Tirath's birth.

Comment

In a small number of cases I am unable to reach any satisfying conclusion about the best interpretation, and this is such a case. I can only offer several possible interpretations for the change in Ram Tirath's statements without asserting that one is clearly superior to any other.

Before coming to these interpretations I will remark that in this case, unlike many others, the birthmark had not figured prominently in the testimony of the informants. It is true that Ram Tirath himself drew our attention to it in 1971. Yet when the two families had met, first at Ujhani and then at Sanjarpur, nothing was said about the birthmark—or so little was said that Kishen Lal had not even seen it by the time we met him in October 1974.

Turning now to the possible interpretations, I believe the simplest and certainly the most innocent of these is that Ram Tirath clarified and improved his memories of the previous life between 1971 and 1975. I have met other informants—and have mentioned some in earlier sections of this work—who modified their first statements at later interviews. Our visits may have stimulated Ram Tirath to think more about the previous life and perhaps thereby brought an improved accuracy to his memories.

A possible subsidiary aspect to this interpretation is that Ram Tirath's parents may have clouded his original memories by interrogating him. Parents by their questioning of a child may divert the course of apparent memory into the wrong channels. Beni Ram and Premwati Devi may have pointed to the birthmark and asked: "What happened to you here?" This could have stimulated a memory of a goring by a bull, and Ram Tirath might have mentioned this. His parents may then have assumed that the goring was fatal and repeated this aloud until Ram Tirath came to accept their version of events. This distortion may have persisted both in his mind and in the minds of his parents until our investigations of the early 1970s.[8]

This leaves unsettled the question of why Kishen Lal, according to both Beni Ram and Premwati Devi, had said in about 1965 that his father had died after

[8]Cases with evidence that the subject incorporated in apparent memories items suggested by his parents include those of Necati Çaylak and Kenedi Alkan.

being gored by a bull, which he denied to us in 1974. I do not believe that Kishen Lal wished to discredit the case; all his other statements seemed to favor it strongly. Perhaps when Ram Tirath's parents mentioned his statement about being gored by a bull, Kishen Lal may have casually remarked that he had heard that his father had been gored and then passed on to talk of other matters. Ram Tirath's parents may have understood his remark to be a verification when it was not. It seems extremely unlikely that Kishen Lal would not remember how his father had died and more probable that Ram Tirath's parents misunderstood a reference he may have made to a bull having gored his father.

If we believe that Kishen Lal did initially say that his father had been gored by a bull, we are left with the further unanswered question of why he later reversed himself in talking with us some years later.

Kailash Kumar Singh had been present during my interview with Ram Tirath in November 1971. In October 1974 he said that he did not remember Ram Tirath to have explicitly connected the bull-goring with the death in the previous life. He said Ram Tirath had mentioned the goring and then had mentioned dying at an indefinite time later. The connection between the goring and death might then have been made incorrectly by my interpreter (Dr. Mehrotra) or by myself. If one or both of us made this mistake—and I do not deny the possibility—we made it twice, because my notes record both Ram Tirath and his father, Beni Ram, as having connected the goring with the death of Man Singh. Dr. Mehrotra participated in the interviews of 1974. (He was indeed my main interpreter, because at that time Dr. Pasricha was still learning that role.) He made no comment suggesting that we had misunderstood Ram Tirath and his father in 1971.

A skeptic who was a marginal informant for the case suggested that the case was a hoax concocted by Beni Ram for the purpose of extracting money from Man Singh's sons. This seems unlikely. Kailash Kumar Singh knew Beni Ram well and had complete confidence in his integrity. Kishen Lal had given some small sums to Ram Tirath, but according to Premwati Devi these did not amount to more than the nominal sums many persons of lower castes donate to Brahmins.

I must leave the case here, only assuring readers that they cannot be more perplexed by it than I am myself. I certainly do not believe that I understand the origin of Ram Tirath's birthmark.

THE CASE OF MIRA DEVI SHARMA

Summary of the Case and Its Investigation

Mira Devi Sharma was born in the village of Risauli, District Budaun, Uttar Pradesh, India, at the end of June 1956. Her parents were Sunderlal Sharma and his wife, Har Devi. They were Brahmins. Sunderlal was a postal employee. Mira Devi was the second child of her parents, who, by 1971, had had four children altogether.

Immediately after Mira Devi's birth she was found to have a prominent birthmark near the center of her forehead. Both her parents later told me that they had noticed this mark at her birth.

Mira Devi began to speak coherently at the age of about 2. When she was between 3 and 4, she started to refer to a previous life. She said that she was called Champa. She talked about her "Munna" and when asked where he was, said that he was in Budaun. She said she had two children, but at first she could not give their full names. She remembered only that their names began with "Ram." (She later expanded this to give the name of one son: Rammurti.) She said her family owned two jewelry shops. Asked to give the name of the previous husband she would only, in the manner of Indian women in villages, give it indirectly. She said that "the name of God is the name of my husband."

Mira Devi asked frequently to go to Budaun, saying that she wanted to see Munna. She sometimes talked to herself and was heard repeating a phrase that can be translated as: "My circumstances have become terrible." She grumbled about the food in her home, saying that she was used to eating wheat bread, whereas her family gave her only millet bread. In the previous life, she said, she had fed milk and sweets to a dog and a horse that her family had owned, but now she could not obtain these foods even for herself.

Information about what Mira Devi was saying reached a family of jewelers in Budaun whose head was Sita Ram. (His second name is close to that of Rama, one of the recognized incarnations of the god Vishnu; so his name accorded with Mira Devi's allusion.) Sita Ram had had a wife called Champa and a son Rammurti, who in turn had had a boy Naresh, alias Munna. Munna had been about 1½ years old when Champa had died. She had died at the age of about 45 in about 1941. She had suffered from what her son called "asthma." She also had swollen legs and "water on the stomach." These terms suggest that congestive heart failure is a likely diagnosis for her final illness.

I have omitted other details stated by Mira Devi that were correct for the life of Champa. Sita Ram and his family met her and quickly accepted her as the reincarnation of Champa. Champa had been a virtuous person, and her family regarded her birth in a Brahmin family as a merited promotion, even though Sunderlal's economic situation was far below that of Sita Ram, who was a member of the subcaste of Banias (businessmen). Champa's family stated that she had been in the habit, when something went wrong, of saying: "My circumstances have become terrible." She said it more often toward the end of her life because at that period her husband's business was in a slump, and the family's economic situation had declined.

Members of both families concerned in this case said that they were not acquainted before the case developed. This seems entirely plausible. They belonged to different castes. Risauli is a somewhat isolated village about 15 kilometers from Budaun. Sita Ram and his son Rammurti said that they had never been there and had no acquaintances there. As for Sunderlal, he would go into Budaun for major shopping (it is the district town), but he said that he had never bought jewelry from Sita Ram or even heard of him.

This case came first to the attention of the late Professor P. Pal, who helped me with the investigation of many cases in India during almost two decades. In October 1964 he was in Budaun to study other cases when he learned about Mira Devi's case. Within the constraints of his schedule he had time then only for a long interview with Champa's husband, Sita Ram; and he did not meet Mira Devi or her family. After this we neglected the case until March 1970. At that time Parmeshwar Dayal (who gave valuable assistance in the investigation of Bhopal Singh's case and other cases also) went to Budaun, where he also interviewed Sita Ram. He also met and interviewed Mira Devi and her paternal uncle, but he did not meet her parents. In November 1971, I took up the investigation with the assistance of Dr. L. P. Mehrotra. We interviewed Mira Devi and both her parents as well as Sita Ram and his (and Champa's) surviving son, Rammurti.

Mira Devi's Birthmark

Figure 13-20 shows the birthmark on Mira Devi's forehead as it appeared in November 1971, when she was a little more than 15 years old. The birthmark was a slightly depressed area of hyperpigmentation near the midline of the forehead. It was somewhat lenticular in shape and measured about 1 centimeter in length and about 3 millimeters in width at its widest.

Har Devi told us that the birthmark was red at Mira Devi's birth, but was not bleeding. It was then larger than it subsequently became.

Mira Devi's Explanation of Her Birthmark

Mira Devi said that in the previous life she (as Champa) had been milking a buffalo when a brick fell down and struck her on the forehead. She said that she was already weak from "asthma" and died almost immediately after this injury.

Failure to Verify Mira Devi's Explanation of Her Birthmark

Both Sita Ram and his son Rammurti firmly denied that Champa had been struck by a brick, either near the time of her death or at any other time. Rammurti had been an adult of 25 when his mother died, and he had been living at home. Therefore, both he and his father, Sita Ram, were well placed to know whether a brick had ever struck Champa.

Possible Explanations for the Discrepancy

I have no reason to doubt the statements of both Mira Devi's parents concerning the presence of the birthmark on her head at birth.

There is equally no reason to suppose that Sita Ram and his son had any motive for withholding information about an accident that had happened to Champa if one had occurred. There was no question of anyone having been at

Figure 13-20 Birthmark near the center of the forehead of Mira Devi as it appeared in November 1971, when she was a little more than 15 years old. The birthmark was a lenticular, somewhat depressed area of hyperpigmentation. It was approximately 1 centimeter long and 3 millimeters wide at its widest.

fault, let alone of criminal charges. Sita Ram and his son readily verified everything else Mira Devi said about the previous life.

The discrepancy may have arisen in one of the following ways.

1. Champa might have suffered from an injury that seemed slight to her at the time so that although she was left with a scar she never mentioned the matter to her husband or son. (I neglected to interview Champa's daughter-in-law, who might have been a potentially useful informant for this possibility.) Dr. Mehrotra discounted this explanation, because he considered it extremely unlikely that a jeweler's wife would be milking buffaloes at home; a servant would ordinarily have done this.

2. There might have been an "intermediate life" between the death of Champa and Mira Devi's birth. Mira Devi had a fair amount to say about life in a heavenly realm during the approximately 15 years between Champa's death and her birth—details that I here omit—but she had no memories of any intermediate terrestrial life and denied that there had been one. Her failure to remember other details about such a life, however, does not eliminate it as a possibility. I discuss the possible role of intermediate lives in Chapter 14.

3. The birthmark on Mira Devi's forehead might have been caused by an injury during her birth without her parents being aware of this. Or the birthmark could have had no relation to any injury or to a previous life. Many subjects of these cases have birthmarks—usually nevi—that neither they nor anyone else attributes to a previous life. Unlike such persons Mira Devi did offer an explanation for her birthmark, which explanation seems to have been a fantasy.

The available evidence does not permit us to choose between the above explanations—which I do not offer anyway as a complete list of possibilities. The case is almost without a parallel—Ram Tirath's being one—in the complete failure to verify an explanation put forward for a birthmark in a case the subject of which made abundant other verified statements about a previous life.

REVIEW OF INFORMANTS' ERRORS IN REMEMBERING WOUNDS ON THE PREVIOUS PERSONALITIES

In this section I will review all the major errors that informants made as they recalled the location of wounds on previous personalities. In Table 13-2 I have summarized the important errors that occurred in, altogether, 19 cases. Of the cases in this table I reported Cases 1-8 in earlier chapters of this work. I reported Cases 9-13 earlier in this chapter. Of these five cases (all included in Table 13-1) I placed the case of Semihe Atasoy in Category B2, that of Vasantha Gunasekera in Category C, and the cases of Bhagwan Din Sharma, Pappu Singh, and Amitha Herath in Category D. (The cases of Brijendra Singh, Suwa Bilat, and Pappu Tiwari do not appear in Table 13-2, because I obtained no testimony from informants about the location of wounds in the previous personalities of their cases.) I have not reported Cases 14-19 in detail. Two of them are included in Category A of Table 13-1 and four in Category C of Table 13-1.

In nine cases (almost half) the error consisted in a confusion between the left and right sides of the body. No one should think that such errors occur more commonly among villagers than among scientists. Dr. Benjamin Sturgill, then Director of the Autopsy Service at the University of Virginia Hospital, informed me that confusion between right and left occurs in about 5% of the reports of autopsies at the University of Virginia Hospital, whose high standards I do not need to extoll. One of my associates, who was working on one of these cases, sketched—with the subject's head in front of him—a prominent birthmark on the head, which he placed on the left instead of the right side of the head. I myself once drew a birth defect as being on the wrong arm of a young man, Bruce Peck, whose case I later investigated (and describe in Chapter 17). I was not yet acquainted with him when I noticed that he had a congenital absence of one forearm. Two years later, after I had learned that he was the subject of a case (but before I had met him again), I made a sketch of his defect showing it on the left instead of the right arm. An informant for the case had implied that the defect was on the left arm, and this misinformation may have influenced my memory of it (D. R. Davis and Sinha, 1950; E. F. Loftus, 1979).

Table 13-2. **Summary of Major Mistakes in Oral Testimony about Location of Previous Personality's Wounds**

Subject	*Previous Personality*	*Location of Relevant Birthmarks or Birth Defects*	*Informants' Statement about Location of Wounds*	*Wounds Recorded in Medical Document (MD) or Stated by Other Informants (OI)*	*Consequence of Informant's Mistake if Medical Record or Other Testimony Had Been Absent*	*Comments*
1. Sampath Priyasantha	Yasupala	Both arms absent; both legs deformed	All limbs almost severed from the trunk	Only three limbs nearly severed (MD)	Slight	Possible error in postmortem report.
2. Tali Sowaid	Said Abul-Hisn	Right and left sides of jaw over the rami of the mandible	Bullet entered at *right* side of jaw, exited at left	Bullet entered at *left* side of jaw, exited at right (MD)	None; correspondence between wounds and birthmarks would have been recorded	
3. Som Pit Hancharoen	Nai Soey	Under left nipple	One informant said Nai Soey was stabbed under the *right* nipple	Nai Soey was stabbed under the *left* nipple (OI)	Concordance between wound and birthmark would not have been recorded	Three other informants, including the murderer who stabbed Nai Soey, said the wound had been under the left nipple.
4. Nasruddin Shah	Hardev Baksh Singh	Lateral aspect of left chest	One informant said that Hardev	Spear wound in *left* side	Concordance between wound	

Table 13-2. *(continued)*

Subject	*Previous Personality*	*Location of Relevant Birthmarks or Birth Defects*	*Informants' Statement about Location of Wounds*	*Wounds Recorded in Medical Document (MD) or Stated by Other Informants (OI)*	*Consequence of Informant's Mistake if Medical Record or Other Testimony Had Been Absent*	*Comments*
Nasruddin Shah (*continued*)			Baksh was speared in the *right* side of the chest; another informant remembered a wound near the lower part of the chest in the midline and one at the back	of chest (MD)	and birthmark would not have been recorded	
5. Narong Yensiri	Pan Srisukit	Chest (midline); chest (left costal margin); left clavicle (?)	One informant remembered wounds on the chest, neck, and back, but none in the abdomen	Wounds recorded on neck, chest, and abdomen; none recorded on back (MD)	Little, because Narong's principal birthmark was on the chest	
6. Linda Chijioke	Ori Chijioke	At top of head, but more on the	One informant remembered that	Another informant said	Little, because Linda's birthmark	

		left side than on right	Ori had a scar on the *right* side of the head	the scar had been on the *left* side of Ori's head (OI)	crossed the midline, although more was on the left side than the right side	
7. Bhopal Singh	Hardyal Singh	On the right side of the neck below the ear	One informant said Hardyal was wounded near the *left* ear	Shotgun wound near *right* ear (MD)	Concordance between wound and birthmark would not have been recorded	
8. Chanai Choomalaiwong	Bua Kai	Birthmark above left eye	Informant stated that bullet had exited near *right* frontal region	Two other informants stated the bullet had exited at or near the *left* eye (OI)	A correspondence of one birthmark might have been missed	The informants agreed about the location of the entry wound.
9. Semihe Atasoy	Nesime Doğruel	On lower chest in midline and about the middle of back, slightly to the right of the midline	One informant said that one bullet entered Nesime's back and exited at the front of her chest	Four bullets entered the front of the chest; three exited at the back (MD)	None; correspondence between two wounds and birthmarks would have been recorded	
10. Bhagwan Din Sharma	Chakko Lal	Forehead in midline; top of head; lateral aspect of right chest (2); lower chest, near midline	Three informants stated that Chakko Lal had been wounded in the chest	Major wound in the upper abdomen, another at the back of the neck (MD)	A false concordance between wound and birthmark would have been recorded	

Table 13-2. *(continued)*

Subject	*Previous Personality*	*Location of Relevant Birthmarks or Birth Defects*	*Informants' Statement about Location of Wounds*	*Wounds Recorded in Medical Document (MD) or Stated by Other Informants (OI)*	*Consequence of Informant's Mistake if Medical Record or Other Testimony Had Been Absent*	*Comments*
11. Pappu Singh	Lala Bhaiya	Below right nipple	One informant thought birthmark (probably a supernumerary nipple) on the *right* side of the chest was at the location of Lala Bhaiya's wound; but he was unsure about the side	Major wound on the *left* side of the chest (MD)	A false concordance between wound and birthmark would have been recorded	The subject probably had no birthmark corresponding to the previous personality's wound.
12. Amitha Herath	Muthumenike	Probably no birthmark occurred at the site of the snakebite	One informant said that snakebite had occurred near the toes of the right foot, later changed his mind and said it had occurred near the ankle	Snakebite near the toes of the right foot (MD)	A false concordance between wound and birthmark would have been recorded	The informant appears to have changed his memory under the influence of the birthmark. The death certificate may be wrong.

13. Vasantha Gunasekera	Shelton Weerasinghe	Superior and medial to right nipple; right back, over scapula	Two informants stated that Shelton had been shot in the chest, one indicating near the midline	Gunshot wound of left chest (MD)	A false concordance between wound and birthmark would have been recorded	The marks identified were probably not birthmarks.
14. Shiv Shankar Sengar	Sampat	Left upper chest, in axilla	One informant said that Sampat had been speared on the *right* side of the chest	Spear wound in *left* upper part of chest (MD and OI)	Concordance between wound and birthmark would not have been recorded if we had had only the testimony of the first informant	
15. Mary Jean Karnov	Mary Jean Kusak	Left lower quadrant of abdomen	One informant said that fatal bullet entered at *right* flank and exited at opposite flank	Bullet entered at *left* lower quadrant of abdomen and exited at right flank (MD)	Concordance between wound and birthmark would not have been recorded	Weak case because subject's mother did not notice birthmark until subject was 4 years old. Case classified in Category C of Table 13-1.
16. Yogesh Yadav	Raja Ram Yadav	Forehead, above left eye	One informant stated that previous personality had	Shotgun wound of left back: other wounds recorded (MD)	A false concordance between this wound and one birthmark would	This informant probably became fixated on a supernumerary

Table 13-2. *(continued)*

Subject	*Previous Personality*	*Location of Relevant Birthmarks or Birth Defects*	*Informants' Statement about Location of Wounds*	*Wounds Recorded in Medical Document (MD) or Stated by Other Informants (OI)*	*Consequence of Informant's Mistake if Medical Record or Other Testimony Had Been Absent*	*Comments*
Yogesh Yadav (*continued*)			been shot in left chest anteriorly		have been recorded	nipple on the subject's left chest. Case classified in Category A1 of Table 13-1 because another wound did correspond to the birthmark on the forehead.
17. Hüseyin Özüsağlam	Mehmet Üstünlü	Faint mark, probably a birthmark, under the left nipple	One informant said there was one wound in Mehmet's chest and three in his abdomen; another informant said there was one wound in the chest and two	Single stab wound under the left nipple which had penetrated the heart; no other wounds noted (MD)	None	The faint mark, probably a birthmark, under the left nipple was observed only after the postmortem report had been studied. Case classified in

			in the abdomen; they both located the chest wound near the midline			Category C of Table 13-1.
18. Manoj Kumar	Nawabsingh	Possible birthmark in right lower quadrant of abdomen	Informant stated that there were wounds in the right *shoulder* and right thigh	Wound of right *elbow*; no wound of right thigh, but a major wound in the right lumbar region and right lower quadrant of the abdomen (MD)	None; no birthmarks corresponded to this informant's statements about wounds	Although there were no birthmarks at the sites where this informant said wounds had been, there was a possible birthmark (not noted at birth) in the right lower quadrant of the abdomen. Case classified in Category C of Table 13-1. The postmortem report was brief and partly illegible.
19. Ronald Mapatunage	Hemasiri Weerasinghe	Midline on front of chest, approximately between upper two-thirds and lower third	Two informants, of whom one was the undertaker who had embalmed Hemasiri's body,	Fatal stab wounds in chest and abdomen; none in the back (MD)	Correspondence between one wound and a possible birthmark would not have	No birthmark was noted on the subject until he was more than 3 years old. A scar of a furuncle may

Table 13-2. *(continued)*

Subject	*Previous Personality*	*Location of Relevant Birthmarks or Birth Defects*	*Informants' Statement about Location of Wounds*	*Wounds Recorded in Medical Document (MD) or Stated by Other Informants (OI)*	*Consequence of Informant's Mistake if Medical Record or Other Testimony Had Been Absent*	*Comments*
Ronald Mapatunage (*continued*)		of sternum	said that he had been stabbed in the back		been recorded	have been mistaken for a birthmark. Case classified in Category C of Table 13-1.

DISCUSSION OF DISCORDANCES BETWEEN BIRTHMARKS AND LOCATIONS OF WOUNDS: THE IMPORTANCE OF MEDICAL DOCUMENTS

Postmortem reports or other medical documents—when accurately made—describe the location of wounds on the previous personality; and they often give additional information, for example, in cases of murder, about the kind of homicidal weapon used. Postmortem examinations are nearly always made within a day or two of death. They are put into the record before the subject (to whose claims a postmortem report may later pertain) is born, let alone been studied by investigators. They are fixed, and knowledge of the birthmarks cannot alter them. In contrast, oral informants for the location of wounds have nearly always met the subject and seen his or her birthmarks. Their knowledge of the birthmark may influence their memories of where wounds were located on the previous personality. We have seen that this may have happened in the case of Amitha Herath, and it came close to happening in that of Pappu Singh.

The postmortem reports (or other relevant documents) make their most important contribution in the appraisal of the cases to which they pertain. In addition, however, they contribute to our confidence in the value of testimony for those cases in which we have not had postmortem reports (or other relevant documents). We can emphasize this contribution by asking the following question: How often would we have been misled into wrongly asserting a satisfactory correspondence of location between birthmarks and wounds, if we had not had the 62 postmortem or other medical reports and related data that I classified in Table 13-1? If we set aside the 13 cases that I classified as inconclusive or ambiguous (Category C), we are left with 49 cases. Among these 49 cases I count 6 (12%) as definitely discordant (Category D) and the remaining 43 (88%) as concordant (Categories A and B). I am not aware of any respect in which the cases for which we obtained postmortem reports differed from those for which we did not. I conclude, therefore, that we may expect to be misled in about 12% of cases without postmortem reports in the direction of mistakenly concluding that a correspondence between wounds and birthmarks exists when it does not. We can also say that if we had no postmortem reports and had to rely on informants' memories, we would make correct judgments in about 88% of cases.

To take the positive side first, the high agreement between oral informants and written documents warrants our believing that most informants will give us reliable testimony. This conclusion differs from that reached by some students of eyewitness testimony who, from experimental results, have become skeptical about almost all such testimony (E.F. Loftus, 1979). The tranquil circumstances of laboratory experiments in eyewitness testimony, however, do not engage the participants' emotions as do life's crises, of which sudden and violent death is one of the most extreme. Here I speak not about the person who experiences the death—although I have much to say about that elsewhere. Instead, I am thinking of the surviving relatives and friends of a person who undergoes such a death. It will arouse

in them unusually strong emotions, which in turn will give vividness and fixation to memories of surrounding details, a condition sometimes called "flashbulb memory" (Brown and Kulik, 1977; Stratton, 1919).[9] Observers of gunfire exchanged between a robber and his victim outside a city shop proved to have excellent memories for details of the shootout, even after several months (Yuille and Cutshall, 1986). Even in laboratory experiments, intensity of affect improves memory (Dutta and Kanungo, 1975). In Chapter 3 of this work I gave some examples of pregnant women who preserved vivid images of some birth defect or injury which they could have had in view only a brief time, perhaps time enough for just a glimpse; but what they had seen aroused them emotionally. I do not therefore find it surprising that such a high proportion of our informants correctly remembered the location of wounds on a deceased person they had known and loved.

It remains true that a number of surviving relatives become so shocked by their loss that they cannot bear to look at the dead body or, if they do look, give poor attention to details of its condition. Rajani Sukla's mother showed this kind of reaction when her young daughter Dev Prabha was killed. Daw Hmwe (in the case of Ma Khin Hsann Oo) became overcome with fright and fled from the morgue where she had gone to see the body of her dead daughter.

Unfortunately, the knowledge that informants *in general* tend to be accurate about the details that here interest us provides no sure guidance *in a particular case*. If we had had no postmortem or other medical reports, we should have been clearly mistaken in 6 of 49 cases. We can find no grounds for complacency in knowing that we may be misled by oral informants in one case out of every seven or eight cases. Because we do not know in advance which of our informants may prove to have poor memories, we cannot forego our vigilance in any individual case.

It is important to note that informants' errors about the location of wounds may lead to false negatives in the matter of correspondences as well as to false positives. A study of Table 13-2 will show that in four (and possibly five) cases we should have missed noting a concordance between wound and birthmark that really existed, if we had not had the postmortem report or other medical document as a corrective for poor memories on the part of the informants.

It has been said that only a fool learns only by his own experience. The novelty of this research may perhaps partly excuse me from having had to learn almost entirely by my own mistakes; but to assist others in avoiding them I will mention the principal pits into which informants and investigators may fall. Errors seem mainly to arise from:

a) Failure to notice a birthmark at birth with subsequent incorrect identification of a postnatal lesion as a birthmark;

[9]Fixation does not mean accuracy. Some flashbulb memories are wrong (Neisser, 1982). Probably most are accurate, but the rememberers' confidence in them is insufficient grounds for saying this. One of the most replicable findings in the study of memory is the absence of a correlation between confidence in a memory and its accuracy (Wells and Murray, 1984).

b) Premature fixation on an irrelevant birthmark, such as a supernumerary nipple may be;

c) Failure in the absence of a postmortem report to obtain testimony from more than one firsthand informant, if there are more than one, concerning the location of wounds or other marks on the previous personality;

d) Inadequate attention to the side—left or right—of a wound or other lesion.

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14

Some Correlates of Birthmarks Attributed to Previous Lives

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter I shall discuss several features that correlate with birthmarks attributed to previous lives—as well as some that do not. I defer a discussion of some other important features, which I can examine more profitably after describing the cases with birth defects.

THE INCIDENCE OF BIRTHMARKS ATTRIBUTED TO WOUNDS IN PREVIOUS LIVES

Although this work describes more than 200 instances of birthmarks and birth defects attributed to previous lives, these lesions only occur in a minority of subjects who remember previous lives that ended in some fatal wounding. We can obtain at least an approximate idea of the incidence of birthmarks among all cases in which wounds figure from our data on cases in which the previous personality died, or was said to have died, of snakebite. (This total includes some unsolved cases in which we have, for the purposes of this analysis, accepted the subject's statement that the previous life ended after a snakebite.) In our collection we have 34 such cases, and among these birthmarks were reported in 14 (41%). I have deliberately said "were reported," because birthmarks might have occurred on some subjects and then have faded

away before anyone noticed them: We would not expect the small wounds that snakes make to stimulate large and easily noticed birthmarks, such as gunshot and shotgun wounds may do. Even so, I should not expect parents to miss almost two-thirds of the birthmarks that snakebites may stimulate. I conclude therefore that birthmarks do not occur in many subjects who remember deaths with wounds that seem to stimulate birthmarks in other subjects. We need to search for the features that distinguish the cases of subjects having birthmarks from those of subjects not having them.

Variations in Reported Birthmarks and Birth Defects in Different Countries

Table 14-1 shows the data we have for the incidence of reported birthmarks in solved cases of nine different countries and cultures. (This table also gives the incidences of violent and natural death among the previous personalities of cases from [slightly different series of] the same countries.) I again stress that the figures listed are of *reported* birthmarks and birth defects. The figures reflect the varying interest of the peoples of the different cultures in examining babies for birthmarks and in using birthmarks as identifiers of a baby's former incarnation. The Haida (of British Columbia and Alaska) and the Druses (of Lebanon) attach little importance to birthmarks, and the low incidence of reports of birthmarks among them may reflect lack of parental attention to this feature. This seems particularly likely to be the case in Lebanon, in the cases of which the incidence (69%) of violent death is near the highest of any culture where I have studied these cases. In contrast, the Igbo (who have a high incidence of birthmarks and birth defects) rely much on birthmarks and birth defects for identifying the previous incarnation of a baby.[1]

I am not suggesting that there is no variation in the real incidence of birthmarks in different cultures. Some of the variance in the data of Table 14-1 may be due to variations in the real incidence, as contrasted with the reported incidence, of birthmarks and birth defects. I am inclined to think that from factors we do not yet recognize there really are fewer cases with birthmarks and birth

[1]My studies of Igbo cases showed the extent to which an investigator's interest in a particular feature of the cases, such as birthmarks and birth defects, may lead to an apparent but spurious higher incidence of the feature. During my first two periods of work among the Igbo (in 1978 and 1981), I studied all cases presented to me without regard to features described in the preliminary information. The cases studied in those years had an incidence of birthmarks and birth defects of 52%. During my next two periods of work in Nigeria (in 1982 and 1984), I often chose for investigation, among the cases about which I had preliminary information, those cases whose subjects were said to have prominent birthmarks or birth defects. In the cases of these two later periods the incidence of birthmarks and birth defects rose to 86%. This made the average incidence of birthmarks and birth defects for the whole series 65% (Stevenson, 1986).

I am not aware of any similar bias toward selecting cases with a special feature in the investigations in other countries.

Table 14-1. **Incidence in Solved Cases of Violent and Natural Deaths in Previous Personalities and of Reported Birthmarks and Birth Defects in Subjects in Different Countries and Cultures**

		Previous Personality's Mode of Death			*Number of Subjects with Reported Birthmarks*
Country	*N*	*Violent*	*Natural*	*N*	*and Birth Defects*
Tlingit (Alaska)	47	17 (36%)	30 (64%)	78	20 (26%)
Haida (Alaska and British Columbia)	17	5 (29%)	12 (71%)	24	5 (21%)
Burma	168	76 (45%)	92 (55%)	185	66 (36%)
India	193	95 (49%)	98 (51%)	207	67 (32%)
Lebanon	94	65 (69%)	29 (31%)	126	7 (6%)
Sri Lanka	35	19 (54%)	16 (46%)	66	20 (30%)
Thailand	32	13 (41%)	19 (59%)	52	23 (44%)
Turkey	80	59 (74%)	21 (26%)	105	67 (64%)
Igbo (Nigeria)	44	13 (30%)	31 (70%)	52	34 (65%)
TOTAL	710	362 (51%)	348 (49%)	895	309 (35%)

Note: Data for Previous Personality's Mode of Death are derived from Cook et al. (1983b), except for the following: Data from the cases of the Tlingit of Alaska, the Haida of Alaska and British Columbia, and the cases in Turkey derive from Stevenson (1980); and the data from the Igbo cases derive from Stevenson (1986). Data for the incidence of birthmarks derive from unpublished analyses of larger series of solved cases.

defects among the Druses than among the Alevis of Turkey or the Burmese. I wish, however, to warn against drawing this conclusion firmly from the information we now have.

Turning now to features that correlate with birthmarks and birth defects, I discuss first factors on the side of the subject. Then I consider the possible influence of "intermediate lives" and of the duration of the interval between the previous personality's death and the subject's birth. After that I discuss factors on the side of the previous personality.

THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE SUBJECT

The Importance of the Skin

In Chapter 9 I showed that wounds and marks of different kinds seemed to stimulate birthmarks of a similar type and that wounds and marks of similar kinds seemed to stimulate different types of birthmarks. The production of a birthmark in these cases appears to be a product of the psychic influence acting on the skin (or other tissues) and the capacity of these tissues to react to the stimulus. We know that the skin tissues of different persons react differently to the wounds of this life; as an example I mentioned in Chapter 2 that 5% of young, healthy persons will develop a conspicuous wheal (dermographism) after their skin is stroked firmly (but 95% of such persons do not). In Chapter 9 I drew attention to the relatively high incidence of keloid formations among Negroes compared with Caucasians and to the lower incidence of psoriasis and sensitivity to *rhus toxicodendron* among Negroes compared with Caucasians.

Individual variations in the skin are of such importance for the present topic that I will mention two further examples. The first set of data comes from an experiment to measure the minimum concentrations of mercuric chloride that would produce skin irritations in 35 subjects. One subject responded to an application of 1 part in 100,000. Several other subjects responded to concentrations of between 3 and 5 parts per 100,000. About one-third of the subjects responded to concentrations of 30 parts per 100,000. Another third only responded to concentrations of 100 parts per 100,000. Several subjects did not respond to any of the concentrations tested (Clark, 1933).

The second observation is even more pertinent to the present work because the experimental subjects were newborn infants. Straus applied a paste containing the toxic substance of *Rhus toxicodendron* (poison ivy) to the skins of 119 infants of between one and four days of age; none showed any reaction to the paste. Two to four weeks later 48 of the infants were tested again with a similar application of the toxin-containing paste. At this time 35 (73%) of the 48 infants showed a definitely positive reaction, but 13 (27%) did not (Straus, 1931).

The Fetus's Stage of Development

Although in the majority of cases the previous personality died before the subject's conception, numerous exceptions occurred. In Table 14-2 I have listed these together with the approximate duration of the pregnancy when the previous personality died. In several instances the pregnancy had reached the 7th or 8th month, and in three the interval between death and birth was only a few days. In the case of Cemil Fahrici we obtained fairly good evidence that he was born within 3 days of Cemil Hayik's death. Yahya Balcı's father thought that Yahya had been born within a day or two of Süleyman Ridvan's

Table 14-2. **Subjects Who Were Conceived before the Previous Personality Had Died**

Subject	*Approximate Duration of Pregnancy When Previous Personality Died (in months)*
Bhopal Singh	1
Ma Khin Hsann Oo	1
Julaluddin Shah	1
Ma Thoung	1
Maung Soe Tun	3
Sanjeev Sharma	3
Metin Köybaşı	4
Ravi Shankar Gupta	5
Semih Tutuşmuş	5
Wilfred Meares	5
Maung Aung Myint	6
Navalkishore Yadav	6
Ali Uğurlu	7.5
Tali Sowaid	7.5
Faris Yuyucuer	7.5
Dellâl Beyaz	8
Mary Jean Karnov	8
Semir Taci	8
Cemil Fahrici	9
Yahya Balcı	9
Punkaj Chauhan	9

Note: In some instances the dates of birth and death are imprecise. Also, I have assumed, but do not know, that all the pregnancies ended at full term. Readers should consult individual case reports for details. I describe the cases of Ma Thoung and Punkaj Chauhan later in this chapter and those of Maung Soe Tun, Julaluddin Shah, Semih Tutuşmuş, and Maung Aung Myint in later chapters of this work. The case of Mary Jean Karnov is not published in detail.

death. Punkaj Chauhan's family learned about the murder of Munnu Babu, whose life Punkaj later remembered, on the day of Punkaj's birth. After the three cases just mentioned the shortest interval between death and birth occurred in the case of Semir Taci, but the interval in his case was probably 4 or more weeks.

Abundance of Subject's Statements and Behavioral Memories

The individual case reports have shown that the cases of the subjects having birthmarks (and birth defects) usually have one, two, or more of the other principal features of the cases that I described in Chapter 1. I stated there (and showed in Table 1-2) that we have found no correlation between the occurrence of birthmarks and birth defects and the number of statements a subject makes about a previous life. Some of the subjects with birthmarks and birth defects made no statements whatever about a previous life. Setting aside the cases with experimental birthmarks (and birth defects), which include some previous personalities who were (pre-verbal) infants at death, I have counted 21 subjects who made no statements whatever about the previous life and 7 others who made only one or two statements. (The subjects who made no statements, and to some extent those who made only one or two, were identified as being the reincarnation of a deceased person on the basis of announcing dreams, behavioral similarities, and a birthmark or birth defect.) I have listed these subjects in Table 14-3.

I have also not observed any connection between the occurrence of birthmarks and birth defects and the manifestation by the subject of unusual behavior, such as phobias and philias, corresponding to what was known or might have been expected of the person of whom the subject was thought to be the reincarnation.

Comment. Before leaving the present topic I will draw attention to the importance of the cases listed in Table 14-3 as evidence against the suggestion that the subjects develop fantasies about events in a previous life in order to explain their birthmarks or birth defects. This did not occur in any of these cases; or, if it did, the subjects kept the fantasies to themselves. I do not mean to deny that the children's parents had identified them—in nearly every instance—with a known deceased person; but this identification had not stimulated claimed imaged memories.

THE INTERVAL BETWEEN THE PREVIOUS PERSONALITY'S DEATH AND THE SUBJECT'S BIRTH

"Intermediate Lives"

In making a list of cases whose subjects did not have birthmarks when, other things being equal, one might have been expected, I noticed that some subjects without birthmarks had described "intermediate lives." By this term I mean a life the subject claims to have lived between the principal one he remembers and his birth. Such intermediate lives are usually brief, and, although the subject's statements about them are sometimes plausible, they are nearly always unverified. Examples occurred in the cases of Gopal Gupta and Pushpa. Gopal, a subject of India, recalled the life of a man (Shaktipal Sharma) who had been shot through the heart; he described an intermediate life in London that he said he had lived between the death of Shaktipal Sharma and his birth. He had no birthmark.

Table 14-3. **Subjects Having Birthmarks and Birth Defects Who Made One, Two, or No Statements about a Previous Life**

A. Subjects Who Made No Statements Whatever

Derek Pitnov
Hüseyin Yılmaz
Bruce Peck
Susumu Ogura
Aristide Kolotey
Augustine Nwachi
Huriye Bugay
Maung Sein Nyunt
Chinta Chandrasiri
Antoinette Jacobsson
Uwamachi Okogbue
Obike Nwonye
Arya Bhushan
Julaluddin Shah
Susan Wilson
Maung Khin Ohn
Maung Aung Cho Thein
Ma Win Myint
Timothy Curran
Maung Tin Soe
Joseph Chukwunta

B. Subjects Who Made Only One or Two Statements

Henry Elkin
Maung Aung Ko Thein
Umar Khan
Yvonne Ehrlich
Wilfred Meares
Patricia Fairley
Henry Demmert III

Note: Some of the cases of this list are described in later chapters of this work.

Pushpa, also a subject in India, remembered the life of a young married woman whose husband stabbed her to death. She said that after dying in that previous life she had been reborn as the son of a temple priest and had died again, at the age of about 4, before being born as Pushpa. She also had no birthmark. Neither of these two intermediate lives was verified.

It is possible that during such intermediate lives, if they really occur, the effects of a wound that would stimulate a birthmark become diminished so that no birthmark or a fainter one occurs in the following life. Mills (1988b) reported briefly a case in which a diminution of the effect of the stimulus seems to have occurred during an intermediate life. The subject of the case was a Gitksan child

(in British Columbia) who was born with a birthmark in the left temporal region of his head. On the basis of this birthmark and an announcing dream, this child was identified as the reincarnation of a man who had died not long before the child's birth. This man also had a birthmark, but a more prominent one, at the left temporal region of his head. He was said to have been the reincarnation of a man who had slipped and fallen onto rocks while he was fishing. He had gashed his head and died of the injuries.

Daw Hnin Aye investigated another case, one in Upper Burma, that seems relevant to the possible influence of intermediate lives in erasing, or at least attenuating, the effect of wounds in generating birthmarks; and I will describe it briefly.

THE CASE OF DAW KHIN

Daw Khin was born in about 1940 in the village of Soo-dut-gyi in the area of Taungdwingyi, Upper Burma. Her parents were U Thar Hla and his wife, Daw San Myint. She was their third child.

I do not know how Daw Hnin Aye first learned of this case. She investigated it in November 1984, when she interviewed Daw Khin and her mother, Daw San Myint. At my request, Daw Hnin Aye returned to Soo-dut-gyi village in March 1990 and had further interviews with Daw Khin and her mother. I have not met them myself. No other informants for the case were available.

According to Daw San Myint, her best friend had been one Ma Mai Ei, who had died of some illness during which her body had become more or less covered with many sores (possibly furuncles that had ulcerated). They were filled with pus. After Ma Mai Ei's death, Daw San Myint dreamed that Ma Mai Ei came to her and said she wanted to be reborn as her child. In her dream, Daw San Myint refused, saying: "You have sores all over your body. Don't come." Nevertheless, she became pregnant that month, and a baby girl (Daw San Myint's first baby) was born and named Ma Ohn Yee. The baby had numerous sores on her neck, fingers, and legs. It died 19 days after being born. Before burying the dead body, Daw San Myint pricked the sores with a safety pin and noticed that blood and pus came out of them.

After Ma Ohn Yee's death, Daw San Myint had a second baby (a boy) who was normal. Then she dreamed that Ma Mai Ei came to her again and said: "My sores are healed now. I am coming to stay with you." Daw San Myint became pregnant once more and gave birth to Ma (later Daw) Khin, who had birthmarks where the sores had been on Ma Ohn Yee (and presumably on Ma Mai Ei); but unlike the first baby (Ma Ohn Yee), Ma Khin had no sores. Later, after she became able to speak, Ma Khin said that she remembered that she "was Ma Mai Ei and also a baby girl."

In November 1984, Daw Khin was 44 years old, and her birthmarks had become quite faint. Nevertheless, Daw Hnin Aye had some of them photographed, and Figure 14-1 shows one near the sternal notch.

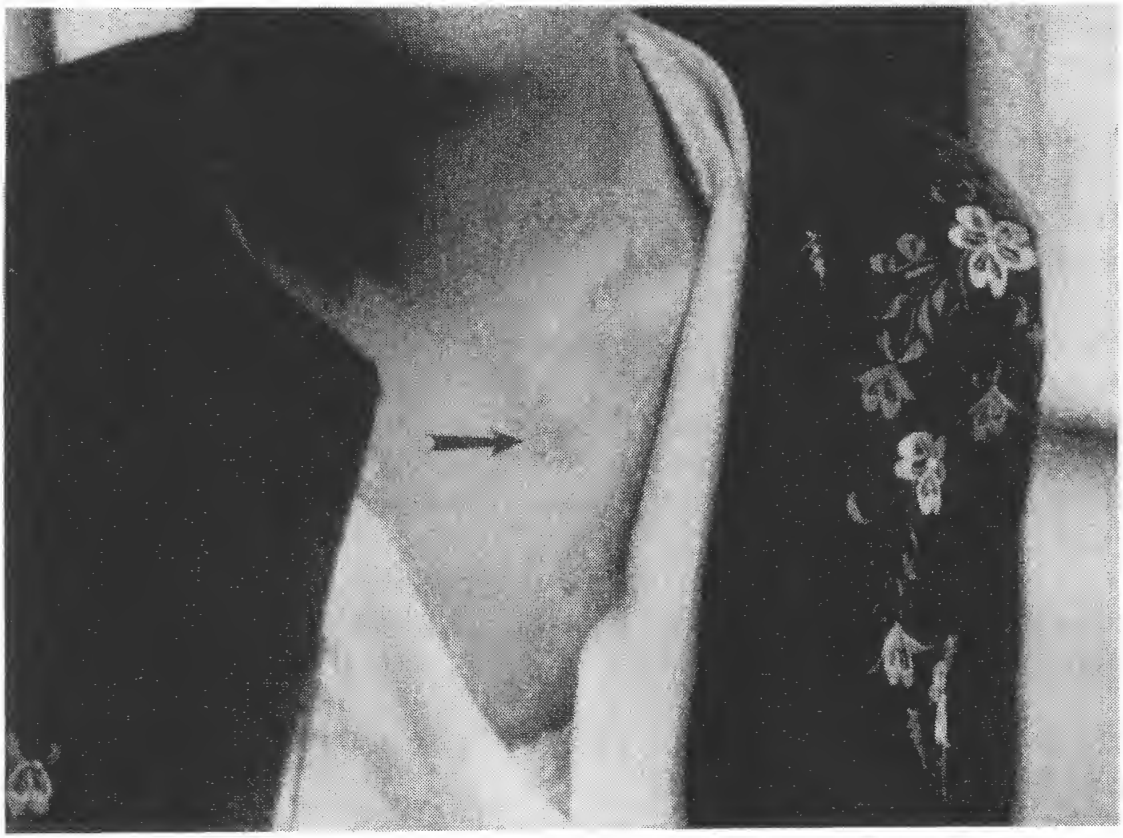

Figure 14-1 Birthmark on the upper chest (near the sternal notch) of Daw Khin as it appeared in November 1984, when she was about 44 years old. The birthmark was an irregularly shaped area of hyperpigmentation, about 1 centimeter long and 1 centimeter wide.

Comment. We cannot say that the intermediate life in this case erased the effect of the sores on Ma Mai Ei, but it may have had some attenuating influence.

I know of three cases in which no attenuation whatever seems to have occurred during a possible (or verified) intermediate life. The first is that of Mounzer Haïdar, a subject of Lebanon. His case included some slight indications of an intermediate life between the death of Jamil Souki (whose life Mounzer remembered) and Mounzer's birth. Mounzer himself never claimed to remember an intermediate life. He had a birthmark that Jamil Souki's mother said was at the location of the fatal wound on her son. No member of Mounzer's family had noticed the birthmark until I examined him and drew it to their attention. Altogether, this case has little standing for the question of whether a birthmark may persist through intermediate lives.

A better example of a contrary instance occurred in the case of Ma Moe Moe Than, which I described in one paragraph in Chapter 10. This was a case of an experimental birthmark. After the principal previous personality had died and his body had been marked, a baby with a birthmark at the site of the marking was born to another family in the same village. This baby died in infancy before it had

begun to speak. Ma Moe Moe Than was then born, and she also had a birthmark at the site of the marking on the principal previous personality.

Daw Hnin Aye sent me notes and photographs about a subject of Burma, Ma Myint Myint Khine, whose case she investigated in 1984. (I have not met Ma Myint Myint Khine myself.) According to the information available, Ma Myint Myint Khine was born with severe birth defects of both her hands which corresponded to similar birth defects in a man, U Hla Gyi, whose life she remembered. U Hla Gyi's birth defects derived, Ma Myint Myint Khine said, from an earlier life that she also remembered. It was that of a trader who was attacked and killed by dacoits in the Shan States. The trader had held up his hands in supplication to plead for his life, and the dacoits had chopped off his fingers with a sword before killing him. (This work includes several other instances of such torture.) U Hla Gyi's son said that Ma Myint Myint Khine's birth defects corresponded closely to those of his father.

I know no other examples with more abundant details and better verifications that would aid our judgment about the possible influence of intermediate lives on birthmarks.

Duration of the Interval between Previous Personality's Death and Subject's Birth

We have not found a correlation between the occurrence of birthmarks and the length of the interval between the previous personality's death and the subject's birth.

The interval may be 8 or more years, and in Table 14-4 I have listed all the cases in which the interval was that long and the subject had a birthmark. This shows that a relatively long interval between death and presumed rebirth is not an insuperable obstacle to the occurrence of a related birthmark. Nevertheless, the duration of this interval may have some effect. We know that within one life many birthmarks fade with time, and we might expect that a psychic force conveying the effect of a wound might diminish with time.

In order to examine this possibility we compared the interval between death and birth in two series of cases with and without birthmarks. For this comparison the tribes of northwestern North America living in British Columbia and Alaska seemed the most suitable. For many cases of this region we have obtained copies of birth and death certificates that are as accurate as such documents can be in Western countries. The dates on these documents are more trustworthy than the corresponding dates remembered by our oral informants in Asia and Africa. (Our most precise dates in these regions come from postmortem reports and occasional horoscopes or other written or printed records, but we obtain these exceptionally rather than as a rule.)

For this analysis of tribal cases in northwestern North America we found data from 108 cases with pertinent death and birth dates that we considered reliable. Among these 108 cases, 37 (34%) had birthmarks or birth defects and 71

Table 14-4. **Subjects of Cases with Interval between Previous Personality's Death and Subject's Birth of 8 or More Years**

Subject	*Interval (in years)*
Derek Pitnov	66
Uwamachi Okogbue	45
Charles Porter	42
Frank Dudley	39
Obike Nwonye	36
Ma Khin Nyein	20-25
Augustine Nwachi	21
Maung Win Aung	21
Pratima Saxena	20
Wijeratne	18.5
Maung Myo Min Thein	18
Cordelia Ekouroume	12
Yvonne Ehrlich	8

Note: Many of the listed intervals are approximate only. Readers should consult individual case reports for details. Six cases in this list are described in later chapters of this work.

(66%) did not. The analysis (t-test) showed that the interval between death and birth was *not* significantly shorter in cases with birthmarks (and birth defects) than in those without.

In a further examination of this relationship, we also analyzed 107 cases in India for which we had information about death and birth dates that seemed adequately reliable. Birthmarks[2] were present on 26 (24%) of these subjects, absent on 81 (76%).[3] There was again no significant difference between the two groups; subjects with birthmarks did not tend to be born after a shorter interval following the previous personality's death than subjects without birthmarks.

A comparison of the median intervals between the previous personality's death and the subject's birth in countries having high and low incidences of reported birthmarks also shows no correlation between the length of the interval and the occurrence of birthmarks. For example, the cases of the Tlingit of Alaska

[2]The two series analyzed and reported in this section included a few cases with birth defects as well as ones with birthmarks. It happens that there are few cases with birth defects (as opposed to birthmarks) among the cases both of India and the tribes of northwestern North America.

[3]The Indian cases here analyzed included only those for which we thought we had adequately reliable dates of birth and death. In addition, they were more thoroughly investigated than were some of the cases included in Table 14-1. Consequently the sample of cases here analyzed is smaller than that of Table 14-1. The percentage of cases with birthmarks (24%) is also less than that (32%) in the larger series.

have the longest median interval (48 months) between death and birth and an intermediate incidence (26%) of reported birthmarks. In contrast, the Druses of Lebanon have the shortest median interval (6 months) and the lowest incidence of reported birthmarks (6%). The cases of Turkey have the second shortest interval (9 months), but they have one of the highest incidences (64%) of reported birthmarks. (These data are from Table 14-1 in this chapter and Table 1 in Stevenson [1983a, p. 9].)

The foregoing analyses do not exclude the possibility of some causal connection between the occurrence of birthmarks and the length of the interval between the previous personality's death and the subject's birth. The interval is short in nearly all the cases that we have investigated whether they have birthmarks (or birth defects) or not. As additional examples I will mention that in a group of 122 cases in Burma (with and without birthmarks and birth defects) the median interval was 21 months; and for a similar group of 95 cases in India it was 16 months (Stevenson, 1983a, p. 9). Thus it remains possible that a short interval somehow facilitates the occurrence of birthmarks and that the cases without birthmarks that we happen to be able to study also have a short interval from some cause or causes that we have not yet identified.

THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE PREVIOUS PERSONALITY

Impairment and Loss of Consciousness

Several lines of evidence suggest that the previous personality's state of consciousness importantly influences the occurrence of birthmarks and birth defects in these cases. Before I describe this more positive evidence, I will mention two trails that I followed which, if they did not exactly lead nowhere, have not been as rewarding as I earlier thought they might be.

Alcoholic Intoxication. From a very small number of cases I began to form the idea that sufficient alcohol might block the occurrence of birthmarks corresponding to fatal wounds. Further experience soon showed me that numerous previous personalities figuring in these cases were definitely or most probably intoxicated when they were fatally wounded. Table 14-5 lists the cases for which I am most confident concerning this feature. All but three of the subjects of these cases had birthmarks corresponding to fatal wounds.

Most of my readers will remember from the preceding case reports that the previous personalities figuring in Table 14-5, although intoxicated, were not "dead drunk" when they were wounded. On the contrary, several of them were struggling with their assassins and might have killed them, if they had not themselves been fatally wounded first.

There are difficulties in the way of identifying any connection between evidence of a person's having consumed alcohol, evidence of being intoxicated (judged by the person's behavior), and impairment of consciousness. Tolerance

Table 14-5. **List of Cases in which the Previous Personality was Intoxicated with Alcohol when Fatally Wounded**

Subject	*Previous Personality*	*Birthmarks or Birth Defects Corresponding to Fatal Wounds*
Necip Ünlütaşkıran	Necip Budak	Yes
Ali Uğurlu	Süleyman Abdülatif	Yes
Henry Demmert III	Henry Demmert, Jr.	Yes
Bhopal Singh	Hardyal Singh	Yes
Som Pit Hancharoen	Nai Soey	Yes
Mehmet Karaytu	Haydar Karadöl	Yes
Maung Aung Myint	Maung Mya Maung	Yes
Semir Taci	Sekip Karşanbaş	Yes
Narong Yensiri	Pan Srisukit	Yes
Maung Kyaw Thein	U Warzi	No
Sampath Priyasantha	Yasupala de Silva	Yes
Sujith Lakmal Jayaratne	Sammy Fernando	No
Maung Chit Htun	U Po Htwe	Yes
Necati Çaylak	Abdülkerim Hadduroğlu	No

Note: In the case of Bhopal Singh we have no independent testimony about whether Hardyal Singh was intoxicated when he was killed. I have included the case here because Hardyal Singh was a known alcoholic and Bhopal said that he was drinking before being killed.

for alcohol varies widely among consumers, and even the blood level of alcohol does not give an infallible guide to impairment of consciousness (Davis and Lipson, 1986; Redmond, 1983).

The following case in Burma, which U Win Maung and I investigated (with help from U Nu) in 1979, illustrates the difficulty we meet in appraising the influence of alcohol in impairing consciousness.

THE CASE OF MAUNG KYAW THEIN

The subject of the case, Maung Kyaw Thein, was born in Pyawbwe, Upper Burma, in 1966. He remembered the life of U Warzi, who had been a seller of mutton *paratas* (a kind of pancake). U Warzi had a stall on the main street of Pyawbwe and sold his paratas in the evenings. He was a notorious alcoholic. One evening (in about 1965) he closed his stall at about midnight and set off for his home on his bicycle. On the way he was attacked by some of his enemies—who were apparently numerous—armed with sticks and knives. They wounded him

severely and in doing so almost severed his left hand. They left him in a ditch where his son, who happened to come along the same road, discovered him. He took his father to a hospital, where his left hand was amputated. U Warzi never recovered consciousness before he died 2 or 3 days later.

Maung Kyaw Thein remembered that U Warzi had been drunk when he was attacked and wounded; he said that if he had been sober he could have dealt effectively with the men who attacked him. Although we were shown a tiny hyperpigmented macule on Maung Kyaw Thein's left arm that might have corresponded to the major wound of U Warzi, I consider it insignificant and believe that Maung Kyaw Thein had no birthmark related to U Warzi's death.

Comment. How intoxicated was U Warzi when he was attacked? On the one hand, he had almost certainly been drinking alcohol before he got on his bicycle to go home. On the other hand, he was able to ride his bicycle and so could not have been "dead drunk." This may, nevertheless, be a case in which alcohol contributed to the absence of birthmarks when they might otherwise have occurred.

Anesthesia. I have already described several cases of birthmarks corresponding to incisions and other features of surgical operations.[4] The operations were performed with anesthesia (general or local), but this did not block the occurrence of birthmarks in subjects who remembered the lives of the persons undergoing the surgery.

Surgical operations figure rarely among the causes of death in cases of the reincarnation type—not just in those whose subjects have birthmarks and birth defects. This may be because when death follows a surgical operation, it rarely occurs during or immediately after the operation, but more commonly some days or even weeks later. In two cases that I investigated in which death followed surgery almost immediately (as it did in the case of Ma Choe Hnin Htet), neither of the subjects (Ratana Wongsombat and Suzanne Ghanem) had a birthmark.

Loss of Consciousness with the Approach of Death. While comparing wounds recorded in postmortem reports with birthmarks on subjects, I became aware that in an appreciable number of cases there were more wounds than birthmarks. Table 14-6 lists 11 such cases. Examination of the table (I mean here the column of Comments) shows that in each case one birthmark corresponded to a wound that would have caused serious damage either to the heart, large blood vessels, or the head. Wounds of the kinds involved in these areas would have led rapidly to loss of consciousness either from hemorrhage or brain damage. Thereafter, although more wounds may have occurred, they seemed not to have stimulated birthmarks. I will now illustrate this point with several examples and then provide an illustrative case report.

[4]The subjects of these cases are Corliss Chotkin, Jr., Muhittin Yılmaz, Ma Choe Hnin Htet, Susan Wilson, Susumu Ogura, Juggi Lal Agarwal, and Jacinta Agbo.

Table 14-6. **Cases in Which Wounds on the Previous Personality Were More Numerous than the Subject's Birthmarks**

Subject	*Previous Personality*	*Number of Wounds on Previous Personality*	*Number of Birthmarks on Subject*	*Comments*
1. Bhopal Singh	Hardyal Singh	3	2	One birthmark corresponded to wound of neck that must have caused copious hemorrhage.
2. Narong Yensiri	Pan Srisukit	5	2, possibly 3	One birthmark corresponded to wound of injury to heart.
3. Yogesh Yadav	Raja Ram	10	1	The single birthmark corresponded to wound to head that may have stunned Raja Ram and made him unconscious.
4. Sunita Singh	Ram Dulari	8	3	Massive hemorrhage from cutting of large blood vessels must have led rapidly to unconsciousness.
5. Punkaj Chauhan	Munnu Babu	3	1	The single birthmark was in the right upper quadrant of the abdomen, near the costal margin.
6. Semihe Atasoy	Nesime Doğruel	7	2	The birthmarks corresponded to wounds of entry and exit from a bullet that penetrated the lung and caused massive hemorrhage.
7. Mehmet Samioğlu	Ali Köybaşı	3	1	The single birth defect corresponded to a blow on the back of the head that would have made Ali Köybaşı unconscious.

Table 14-6. *(continued)*

Subject	*Previous Personality*	*Number of Wounds on Previous Personality*	*Number of Birthmarks on Subject*	*Comments*
8. Wilfred Meares	Victor Smart	4	1	The birthmark corresponded to the site where Victor Smart's head struck the pavement with great force. His neck was fractured, and he died instantly.
9. Nirankar Bhatnagar	Shiv Dayal	2	1	The wounds in this case are unverified. Nirankar had a birthmark apparently corresponding to a blow from a lathi; but he had no birthmark corresponding to a stab wound that he said Shiv Dayal received.
10. Ma Khin Mar Htoo	Kalamagyi	2	1	The right leg was amputated and then the trunk bisected by a railway train. The subject's right leg was absent below the knee; she had no birth defect of the trunk. The analysis here neglects the birth defects of Ma Khin Mar Htoo's hands for wounds corresponding to which we have no information.
11. Vinod Singh	Soran	10	5	The most prominent birthmark on the trunk corresponded to an abdominal shotgun wound that lacerated the left lobe of the liver and might have punctured the aorta or other large abdominal blood vessel.

Semihe Atasoy remembered the life of Nesime Doğruel, whose husband, when drunk, fired five shots from a gun at her. She died almost instantly. (The first shot, remembered by Semihe, produced a bruise on Nesime's elbow without penetrating the skin, and Semihe had no birthmark corresponding to it.) The postmortem report on Nesime recorded four bullet wounds of entry on her chest. However, Semihe had only one birthmark on her chest. It, however, was at the lower end of her sternum a little to the left of the midline. Nesime died from hemorrhage into the lungs, and I conjecture that the first bullet fired into her chest caused her to lose consciousness and produced enough damage to kill her. The other three shots were, from the murderer's point of view, otiose. My conjecture that the shot through the lower left chest made Nesime unconscious receives support from Semihe's remembering that her husband fired only two shots: one that hit her in the elbow and one that hit her in the chest. She said nothing about the other three shots. We do not know in what order Nesime's husband fired the four shots that wounded her in the chest; but according to my reasoning, the first of the chest wounds was the one at the lower end of her sternum, which was at the site of the single birthmark on her chest. Semihe had a second birthmark on her back, and this presumably corresponded to one of three exit wounds found on Nesime.

The case of Vinod Singh (a subject in India) provides another illustration of the possible role of consciousness in the generation of birthmarks. Vinod remembered the life of a dacoit named Soran, who was killed by his enemies armed with lathis and shotguns. The postmortem report of Soran listed 10 wounds. Most of these were superficial and probably caused by scattered shotgun pellets; three wounds, however, penetrated the chest and the abdomen. Vinod had no birthmark corresponding to the chest wound and a faint (later faded) birthmark corresponding to one abdominal wound. The most prominent birthmark on his trunk (still clearly visible when he was 15 years old) was in the left upper abdomen, and its location corresponded closely with a shotgun wound that lacerated the left lobe of the liver and stomach; it must also have torn large abdominal blood vessels. Relevant here is that Vinod as late as December 1992 (when he was 15 years old) remembered receiving (as Soran) this wound, but not the other two. He said that after Soran was shot in the left abdomen some of his intestines came out through the wound opening; Soran, he said, tried to push them back into the abdomen and felt extreme pain. Vinod remembered nothing after that. I conjecture, therefore, that Soran was shot first in the left abdomen and that he was losing consciousness or had lost consciousness when he was shot two more times.

I will next mention two cases whose full reports come later in the sections of this work on birth defects. The first is that of Ma Khin Mar Htoo (of Burma), who remembered the life of a young girl, Kalamagyi, who was run over by a railway train. Kalamagyi's right leg was found on the railway tracks some distance behind the remainder of her body, which the train had transected. This means that the train had amputated her leg first while, one might suppose, she was still conscious, with the rest of her body being dragged by the train. However, such an amputation would have caused massive hemorrhage and shock so that Kalamagyi would have lost consciousness almost immediately and been unconscious when later parts of the train crossed

the trunk of her body. We can suppose that she lost consciousness as she tried to throw herself between the wheels of a carriage. This sequence of events could help us to understand why Ma Khin Mar Htoo was born with the lower part of her right leg missing, but without a birthmark or birth defect of the trunk of her body.

The case of Mehmet Samioğlu of Turkey (included in Chapter 18) also illustrates the connection between consciousness and a birthmark or birth defect. Mehmet remembered the life of Ali Köybaşı, who was killed during an election riot at Hatun Köy. Despite my inability to meet a firsthand witness of the murder of Ali Köybaşı—or perhaps I should say meet one who would talk about his murder—I think we can reconstruct Ali's murder with reasonable accuracy from the accounts of secondhand witnesses (who would have learned their information almost immediately after the crime) and from the report of the postmortem on Ali's body. When Ali's brother Haşim[5] was fatally wounded in the same riot, Ali went to help him and was kneeling over (or beside) his brother when he was himself killed. He was hit on the back of the head by "a solid object" (blunt instrument) which might have been a heavy piece of timber, a crowbar, or anything suitable that was at hand. He was also shot through the mouth at close range. I think we can suppose that no one could have approached Ali and shot him through the mouth while his head was, almost certainly, looking down at his brother. Moreover, if he was first shot through the mouth, there would be no point in hitting him on the back of the head with a blunt instrument. We can be almost certain, therefore, that two assailants attacked Ali. One came up behind him as he was kneeling over Haşim and hit him on the back of the head. After he was thus struck—and, I believe, had lost consciousness—another rioter approached with a gun and shot him through the mouth at close range. Mehmet had an encephalocele at the back of his head, but no birthmark in the area of his lips, where the postmortem report described a wound on Ali.

We could draw another example of the relationship between consciousness at the time of wounding and the occurrence of birthmarks from the case of Wilfred Meares. He had only one birthmark, that on the back of his head. Victor Smart (of whom Wilfred was believed to be the reincarnation) was ejected from the car in which he was traveling and hit the pavement head first. When his head struck the pavement, his cervical spine must have been immediately fractured, and this would have brought instant loss of consciousness and death. Wilfred had no birthmarks or birth defects corresponding to the transection of Victor Smart's tongue or to the other fractures (of an arm and ribs) that he was found to have had.

A somewhat parallel case is that of Sant Charan Singh, a subject born on July 17, 1982, in Aundh, a village near Fatehabad, District Agra, Uttar Pradesh, India. Dr. Satwant Pasricha and I investigated his case in 1985 and 1986, when he was less than 4 years old. Sant Charan stated numerous correct details about the life and death of a wealthy young man called Vijay Agarwal, who had been murdered in Fatehabad on December 28, 1979. Vijay's younger brother, Nandkishore Kumar,

[5]Haşim's life was remembered by Metin Köybaşı, whose case I described in Chapter 6.

was an eyewitness of Vijay's murder. He said that Vijay's several assailants first struck Vijay on the head with a lathi and then shot him at least twice with guns. They then beat him further with lathis and fled. After Vijay was struck on the head, he had fought with his murderers until he fell down. Vijay's friends and family put him in a van to take him to the nearest hospital in Agra, but he died on the way. Sant Charan had no birthmarks. (His parents had noticed none at or following his birth, and Dr. Pasricha and I could find none when we examined him; as I mentioned, he was then not yet 4 years old.) I conjecture that the lathi blow to Vijay's head stunned him and impaired his consciousness so that, even though he struggled for a little afterward, the impairment of consciousness diminished the effect his wounds might otherwise have had in stimulating birthmarks on Sant Charan. (I would have expected Sant Charan to have a birthmark on his head, but he had none.)

The case of Alan Gamble furnished yet another pertinent example. In his case we know that Walter Wilson (whose life Alan remembered) developed gangrene of the hand and forearm after being wounded, and a surgeon amputated the lower part of his forearm without being able to save his life. Although Alan had birthmarks corresponding to the wounds of entry and exit on Walter Wilson, he had a completely intact forearm, not a stump. The amputation of Walter's forearm must have been performed under anesthesia.

Cases in which the previous personality was decapitated sometimes illustrate the influence of loss of consciousness on the occurrence of birthmarks. In the chapters on birth defects I describe cases in which murdered persons were killed with sword or knife cuts across the neck, and yet the subjects of these cases did not all have birthmarks on the neck. One such subject was the Ven. U Narada. He remembered the previous life of a trader who was robbed and murdered. He said that the robbers slashed his hands first and then cut off his head with two strokes. (His account was partly verified.) He had birth defects of two fingers of one hand, but no birthmark (or defect) on the neck.

The child Munna whose life Ravi Shankar Gupta remembered was brutally murdered by having his head cut off. We do not know how the murderers proceeded to do this, but Ravi Shankar pointed to the birthmark on the front of his neck when he described how he had been killed in the previous life. The birthmark did not extend entirely around his head, and I believe that this is because Munna lost consciousness after the great blood vessels at the front of the neck had been severed.

In Chapter 17 I describe the case of Yusuf Köse. He remembered the life of a man (in Turkey) called Halil Ridvan, who was killed, he said, by having his head cut off with a knife moving from the back of the neck toward the front. (This particular detail is unverified.) Yusuf Köse was said to have had a birthmark at the back of his neck (but not the front), although this had faded by the time I first met him, when he was already an old man. Again, I suppose that Halil Ridvan lost consciousness when the knife cut his brain stem.

The Ven. U Sandimar (the subject of another case I describe in Chapter 17) also remembered the life of a man who had been killed by decapitation. In his case we have no information about whether the sword struck him at the back of

the neck or the front. The Ven. U Sandimar had a birthmark at the back of his neck (which had faded by the time I met him) but none at the front, and, if I may reason backward here, I conjecture that the sword struck the previous personality of this case at the back of the neck.

Another case involving decapitation is that of Ma Myint Thein, which I also describe in Chapter 17. Ma Myint Thein's mother said that she had a linear birthmark on her neck when she was born, but this had faded by the time I examined her in 1977 (when she was more than 20 years old). Ma Myint Thein's memories of the previous life included one of having her fingers struck off by the murderer's sword, but she had no memory of the sword stroke on the neck that almost severed the head of U Sein, the man whose life she remembered. I think it likely that U Sein lost consciousness after his fingers were chopped off and while his head was being cut off.

I will now present in more detail a case with death by decapitation that provides yet another illustration of the role of consciousness in the occurrence of birthmarks.

THE CASE OF MA THOUNG

Summary of the Case and Its Investigation

Ma Thoung was born in the village of Battakyaunggone, near Pyawbwe, in Upper Burma on November 5, 1945. Her parents were U Tet Sein and his wife, Daw Daw. Ma Thoung was the second of their three children. U Tet Sein was a policeman.

At her birth Ma Thoung's parents noticed that she had a birth defect in the region of her left ear that appeared somewhat like the scar of a cut in the skin. This birth defect and a dream (that I shall describe later) led her parents to identify Ma Thoung as the reincarnation of a girl called Ma Mya Sein, who had been executed (beheaded) by Japanese soldiers in March or April 1945. This was about 8 months before Ma Thoung's birth. Ma Mya Sein had lived at a village called Paygone, and she had been killed near another one called Sipin.

According to U Tet Sein, Ma Thoung began speaking coherently when she was about 2 years old, and when she was nearly 3, she started to refer to the life of Ma Mya Sein and say how she had been killed by Japanese soldiers. Daw Daw, Ma Thoung's mother, said that Ma Thoung began speaking about the previous life almost as soon as she could talk, and she said both of these events occurred when Ma Thoung was about 3 years old. Ma Thoung also showed some unusual behavior concordant with her statements, but such behavior does not form a prominent part of the case.

The case came to the attention of U Nu, who interviewed Ma Thoung and her father, U Tet Sein, on October 19, 1975. He gave the information to U Win Maung, who conveyed it to me. In March 1978, U Win Maung and I interviewed Ma Thoung and both her parents. Our interviews took place in Pyawbwe and in

Battakyaunggone. By this time Ma Thoung was about 32½ years old; she had married and borne seven children; she also worked as a seller of foodstuffs. Other informants for the case had died or were otherwise unavailable.

In 1980 I met Ma Thoung again, but only briefly. I was dissatisfied with the photographs I had taken earlier of her birth defect and asked her to let me take more. She obligingly agreed, but this meant that she had to leave her stall where she was selling foodstuffs at a pagoda festival; so we did not detain her longer than was necessary to take the photographs.

In 1985 Daw Hnin Aye returned to the area of the case taking some questions about details that I had sent her. In the meantime, Daw Daw had died, but Daw Hnin Aye had another meeting with Ma Thoung and her father. She also obtained some additional information from two new informants: Daw Mya Gyi, who was Daw Daw's older sister, and Daw Kway, who was Ma Mya Sein's first cousin.

Relevant Facts of Geography and Possibilities for Normal Means of Communication between the Two Families

Pyawbwe is 40 kilometers southeast of the city of Meiktila. Meiktila was a major target of the British advance into Burma toward the end of World War II in the spring of 1945 (see Appendix B). The British captured it on March 3. Thereafter, they continued to push the Japanese Army east and south. The Japanese Army tried to block the British advance into Pyawbwe, and this entailed much heavy fighting in the villages around Pyawbwe.

The villages concerned in this case are all 8 kilometers or less from Pyawbwe. Battakyaunggone is about 4 kilometers south and slightly west of Pyawbwe. Paygone is another 2 kilometers farther south, and Sipin village (where Ma Mya Sein was executed) is 1.5 kilometers southeast of Paygone.

The railway line between Mandalay and Rangoon passes through Pyawbwe, and south of Pyawbwe it crosses the main highway several times. One crossing is at Paygone, Ma Mya Sein's village.

The families concerned in the case were not related, but they were acquainted before it developed. U Tet Sein said that he had known Ma Mya Sein well. He had been stationed at the Police Station in Paygone at the time of Ma Mya Sein's death. He and his wife were living at Paygone then, but on the day of Ma Mya Sein's execution, he was in his village of Battakyaunggone. He learned about her death soon afterward.

The Life and Death of Ma Mya Sein

Ma Mya Sein was born in about 1925, probably at her parent's village of Paygone. Her parents were U Pu Toe and Daw Yay Kyi.

During the Japanese occupation of Burma, she engaged in trade, mainly of vegetables. She had three partners in trading, one being her younger sister, Ma Mya Chein.

According to U Tet Sein, Ma Mya Sein was trading illicitly in scrap iron, a commodity badly needed by the Japanese. U Tet Sein warned Ma Mya Sein about the illegality of her trading, but she told him there was nothing to fear and continued. About 2 days later, U Tet Sein learned that Ma Mya Sein and her companions had been arrested and some of them executed. Ma Mya Sein and her sister, Ma Mya Chein, were killed, but two others of the group, U Tun Sein and U Ma Saw, managed to escape and brought news of the beheading of Ma Mya Sein and her sister. (U Tun Sein and U Ma Saw had subsequently died.)

Daw Daw gave us a somewhat different explanation for the execution of Ma Mya Sein and her sister. What she said accords with Ma Thoung's own memories (in 1978) and is therefore not free from the possibility that she adapted her account to fit Ma Thoung's memories. (Similarly, what Ma Thoung said in 1978 might have been shaped by what her mother had told her about the reasons for Ma Mya Sein's death.) Daw Daw described Ma Mya Sein's death as a mercy killing. Ma Mya Sein and her companions had been selling vegetables to the Japanese Army. The Japanese soldiers, Daw Daw speculated, thought that the British Army would capture Ma Mya Sein and handle her cruelly; so in order to prevent the traders from falling into the hands of the British, they decided to kill them themselves.[6]

It is impossible to fix a precise date for Ma Mya Sein's death, but we can come within 2 months, if we say that it must have occurred during March or April 1945. U Tet Sein remembered it as occurring during the Japanese retreat from the area of Pyawbwe, which the British captured on April 10. If we accept Ma Thoung's claim that she remembered, in the previous life, hearing about the fall of Meiktila to the British, we could come even closer. As I mentioned, the British captured Meiktila on March 3, 1945, and Ma Mya Sein would have died not more than a few weeks later.

Statements and Recognitions Made by Ma Thoung

What was possibly Ma Thoung's first reference to the previous life occurred when she saw the Paygone pagoda from Battakyaunggone. She pointed in the direction of the pagoda and said she wanted to go there. She said that she had par-

[6]In order to appreciate the probable attitude of the Japanese soldiers in this matter, one needs to understand that the Japanese of this period had no concept of surrender during war with survival afterward. They regarded anyone who surrendered and thereby became a living prisoner of the enemy as a nonperson—effectively dead. This attitude accounted for much of their own mistreatment of Allied prisoners of war (Nu, 1954; Russell, 1958). Although high Japanese officers knew that the Allies fighting them had a different attitude toward prisoners of war, junior officers and ordinary soldiers of the Japanese Army would probably not have known this. They would assume that the British would torture and kill Ma Mya Sein and her companions just as they themselves might have done with any prisoner they captured alive.

U Win Maung discounted the conjecture about "mercy killing" on the part of the Japanese soldiers; he said it was contrary to Asian attitudes and practices. On the other hand, the Japanese Army treated thefts and other illegal actions with great severity. Daw Hnin Aye, who lived in Burma during the Japanese occupation, told me that the Japanese usually executed summarily anyone caught stealing.

ents there and that her house was there. U Tet Sein, who heard these remarks, asked her: "Who are you?" She replied: "Ma Mya Sein."

Ma Thoung described having been killed by the Japanese along with three other persons. She said their bodies were thrown into a well and received no funeral service. (She complained about this omission, forgetting or overlooking the complete social chaos in Upper Burma when the Japanese Army was retreating before the advance of the British Army.)

Daw Daw said that when Ma Thoung was young, she did not say why the Japanese had killed Ma Mya Sein. (This is another reason for treating with reserve Ma Thoung's statements in 1978 about why Ma Mya Sein was executed.)

According to Ma Thoung's parents, when she first went to Paygone, she led the way in advance of the adults accompanying her and conducted them "straight" to Ma Mya Sein's house. U Tet Sein said that Ma Thoung was able to recognize relatives of Ma Mya Sein and also the place (near Sipin village) where Ma Mya Sein had been beheaded. I did not learn details of these recognitions.

Ma Thoung also remembered a cow that had been given to Ma Mya Sein. She made some statements about the cow, and she recognized it when she went to Ma Mya Sein's village of Paygone. (My notes do not make clear whether Ma Thoung mentioned Ma Mya Sein's cow before she went to Paygone and saw the cow.) She asked to have the cow given to her, but Ma Mya Sein's family did not agree to do this.

Daw Daw said that Ma Thoung was between 4 and 5 when she first went to Paygone; U Tet Sein thought she was between 3 and 4.

Apart from her references to Ma Mya Sein's body being thrown in a well and not being given a proper burial, Ma Thoung made no statements about experiences or events occurring between Ma Mya Sein's death and her birth.

Ma Thoung's Statements in 1975 and 1978. In 1975 Ma Thoung made the following statement to U Nu concerning the death of Ma Mya Sein:

> In my last life I used to collect scrap iron for my father's work. I was very friendly with U Tet Sein [Ma Thoung's father] even then. I remember that he was serving as a policeman in the Paygone Police Station, which was situated near the north railway crossing. I still remember the reoccupation of Meiktila by the British soldiers, when I heard the artillery fire. I also remember the Allied planes strafing the area almost constantly.
>
> It was about ten o'clock in the morning, one early summer day when we (Ma Mya Sein, Ma Mya Chein, U Tun Sein, and U Maw Htoo)[7] were arrested by a patrol of the retreating Japanese Army. It was a misty day. All four of us were taken to a well in a coconut grove, just north of the Sipin road bridge, west of Gonbin creek. We were asked to stand side by side and then the Japanese, taking hold of our napes, chopped us down. I remember the sharp tingling sensation [of the sword] just before I lost consciousness. I do not

[7]U Tet Sein remembered the name of the fourth person the Japanese were going to execute as U Ma Saw. He and U Tun Sein escaped from the Japanese patrol.

> know which of us was killed first, and I thought we were all dead. I only learned in this life that U Tun Sein and U Maw Htoo had survived, while my sister and I were killed. U Tun Sein lost one ear, and he has a big scar on his face. I recognized them both [U Tun Sein and U Maw Htoo] when I met them for the first time in this life. U Maw Htoo also has scars.
>
> When I was young, I visited the house of my previous life, and I indicated the cows that I had looked after as well as my personal belongings and my paddy fields. What I am now saying does not come from a dream. I still remember my last life vividly. I enjoy my present life much more than the previous life, because I have more freedom now, and in my previous life I was earning a precarious living.
>
> I remember well the place where I was executed, and I used to have the shivers when I went past it; but it no longer affects me in this way. I feel that the old life and the new are continuous....
>
> Because I believed that when a man died he would be reborn as a human, I consider death to be like a short dream.

In 1978 Ma Thoung added some further details (with small discrepancies) when she talked to U Win Maung and me. I quote the following from my notes:

> We were selling vegetables to the Japanese Army. We were friendly with them. I had stopped selling scrap iron at that time [meaning when Ma Mya Sein was killed]. The Japanese advised me not to keep coming to them because they were retreating, but I went anyway. The Japanese soldiers took pity on us and thought it better for them to kill us rather than the British. They did not tie us up. They asked us to sit down and then struck at our necks from behind. I did not know we were going to be killed until they began to kill us. The sword hit my neck at a slant.

Figure 14-2 shows a sword used by a Japanese soldier during World War II. This particular one came into the possession of U Nu, who gave it to me during one of my visits to Pyawbwe. I suppose Ma Mya Sein was beheaded with a similar weapon.

Announcing Dreams

In his initial statement (in 1975) to U Nu, U Tet Sein said that he had dreamed that Ma Mya Sein had told him she was coming to stay with him and his wife. He added that his wife became pregnant soon after this dream. He also described a pertinent dream that he said the parents of Ma Mya Sein had had.

Between 1975 and our meeting with him in 1978, U Tet Sein probably discussed the dreams with his wife, Daw Daw. At any rate, in 1978 he and his wife agreed that *he* had not had a dream about Ma Mya Sein, but that Ma Mya Sein's mother, Daw Yay Kyi, had had one. According to U Tet Sein's account of the dream, Ma Mya Sein had in it told her mother that she was going to live with U Tet Sein. She had also said in the dream that she would have a mark on her neck.

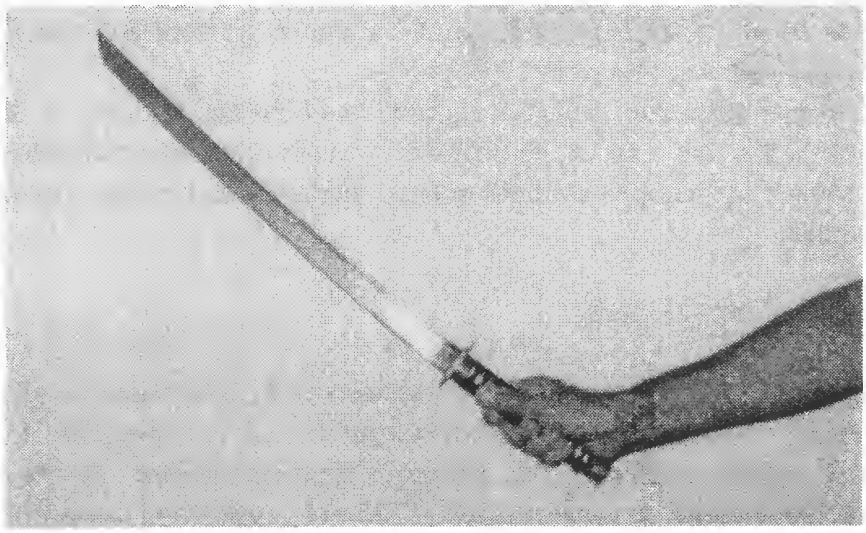

Figure 14-2 Japanese Army sword from World War II. A sword of this type was probably used in the beheading of Ma Mya Sein.

When Ma Thoung was born, Daw Yay Kyi came and examined the baby. Apparently the combination of the dream and the birth defect convinced her that Ma Thoung was Ma Mya Sein reborn, and she wept. (Daw Yay Kyi had died before our interviews of 1978). Daw Daw confirmed that Daw Yay Kyi had had a dream about Ma Mya Sein, but she said that both Ma Mya Sein's parents had had dreams (which U Tet Sein had also said in 1975) and that both of them, not just Daw Yay Kyi, had come to see and examine Ma Thoung when she was a baby.

U Tet Sein said that Daw Daw was 6 months pregnant with Ma Thoung when Daw Yay Kyi had her dream. (I did not ask Daw Daw about this detail.)

Ma Thoung's Behavior Related to the Previous Life

Ma Thoung continued speaking spontaneously about the previous life until she was about 15 years old. We have seen also that in her early 30s she believed she still had clear memories of the death of Ma Mya Sein. However, in 1978 she said that her memories were fading to some extent. Her statement in 1975 also mentioned that she had by then lost the reaction of fear that she had experienced earlier when passing the place near Sipin village where Ma Mya Sein had been killed.

Daw Daw said that when Ma Thoung was a young child, the barking of dogs would cause her to hide. She imagined the dogs were giving warning of strangers coming to the village, and she took these to be Japanese soldiers.

Daw Daw thought that Ma Thoung showed fear rather than anger toward Japanese people. Ma Thoung herself told us (in 1978) that when she had been young she had hated the Japanese; but she was also afraid of them, and when she saw them, she would not look at them. (She would not have had much occasion, if any, to meet Japanese people until she was more than 10 years old. After the defeat of Japan in World War II, some years elapsed before Japanese people

returned to Burma in any numbers; and Japanese visitors still seemed rare in Burma when I first went there in 1970.)

U Tet Sein remarked that Ma Thoung was bold and decisive in her manner. He thought that in this respect she differed from his other two children and resembled Ma Mya Sein, who, as we have seen, continued her trading under hazardous circumstances.

Ma Thoung's Birth Defect

Figure 14-3 derives from the best photograph I could obtain of Ma Thoung's birth defect. It was a groove in the skin behind the left ear, and part of the lobe of the ear was slightly malformed. Ma Thoung's right ear (Figure 14-4) was normal.

Daw Daw said that the birth defect did not ooze blood or serum when Ma Thoung was born; and she said that it had not changed appreciably in appearance since her birth. U Tet Sein agreed that the birth defect was dry at Ma Thoung's birth, and he described it as looking at the time "like a healed knife cut."

I failed to ask Daw Daw about the course of her pregnancy with Ma Thoung, and she had died before Daw Hnin Aye went to Battakyaunggone. Daw Hnin Aye, however, was able to question Daw Mya Gyi, Daw Daw's older sister, on this matter; and Daw Mya Gyi said that Daw Daw enjoyed good health during her pregnancy with Ma Thoung, and her delivery was normal.

Daw Daw said that Ma Thoung had not complained of pain in the neck when she was young. However, Ma Thoung told us in 1978 that she had pain in her neck at the site of the birth defect during damp weather.

U Tet Sein did not think that Ma Thoung resembled Ma Mya Sein physically, but Daw Daw remarked that both women were rather large, strong, and dark in complexion. Her other children were fairer than Ma Thoung.

Comment

If we accept U Tet Sein's secondhand account (obtained from the two men who had escaped from the Japanese patrol), Ma Mya Sein was beheaded by a Japanese soldier. According to Ma Thoung, she lost consciousness at the moment when she felt the soldier's sword cutting her neck. Her birth defect appeared to correspond with the initial wound of a beheading sword stroke.

If we accept that the birth defect and wound corresponded, the question arises of why the Japanese executioner began the beheading with a cut so high on the neck as to cut the ear. Perhaps Ma Thoung gave the answer when she said that the executioner took hold of the prisoners by their napes. If so, he would have had one of his hands gripping the back of the victim's neck and would have made his sword stroke somewhat higher up in order to avoid cutting his own hand.

If I may here reason backward from the birth defect on Ma Thoung's left ear, I would say that the Japanese soldier who decapitated Ma Mya Sein was right-handed; but we will never know whether I am correct in this inference.

Figure 14-3 Left ear of Ma Thoung as it appeared in March 1978, when she was about 32½ years old. There was a scarlike distortion of skin tissue on the medial side of the pinna and a defect in the junction of the lobe and helix.

Figure 14-4 Normal right ear of Ma Thoung as it appeared in March 1978.

I now present a brief report of a case that does not seem to accord with what I have just been suggesting: This is that wounds occurring before a dying person loses consciousness may correspond with birthmarks, but those occurring afterward do not. There are several weaknesses in the testimony for this case, and I was somewhat inclined to omit any mention of it. Yet it is better for my readers to decide for themselves how much weight to give its evidence.

THE CASE OF PUNKAJ CHAUHAN

Summary of the Case and Its Investigation

Punkaj Chauhan was born in Bewar, District Mainpuri, Uttar Pradesh, India, on December 5, 1974. His parents were Satyapal Singh and his wife, Pushpa Kumari. They were members of the Thakur subcaste, and Satyapal Singh was a small businessman. Punkaj was the fifth of six children in the family.

When Punkaj was about 2½ years old, he began to speak about a previous life. He said that he was Munnu Babu of Bhoor Nagaria and that he had two wives and three daughters. He said that he had been shot from behind while trying to get his Jeep started. He wanted to go to Bhoor Nagaria.

Punkaj pointed to his abdomen as he described how he had been shot, and his parents then found a mark there that they had not noticed earlier. They considered it a birthmark (Figure 14-5).

Punkaj's statements matched events in the life of a young man called Purshotam Singh, alias Munnu Babu, who had lived and been murdered at the village of Bhoor Nagaria, which is about 21 kilometers north of Bewar. His father, Rajender Singh Yadav, was a wealthy and prominent person of the area. Munnu Babu himself was a minor politician with enemies who decided to kill him after he made a decision affecting them adversely. They went to his home, took him by surprise, and killed him with three blasts from a shotgun or shotguns. The murderers were arrested and duly tried; in the end they were acquitted, Munnu Babu's father said, "through corrupted medical evidence and bribery."

Information about what Punkaj had been saying reached Munnu Babu's family, and they asked Punkaj to visit them. At their house Punkaj behaved familiarly with Munnu Babu's family and answered questions put to him to their complete satisfaction.

Munnu Babu had been killed on December 4, 1974, which was the day before Punkaj's birth. News of his sensational murder had traveled rapidly to Bewar, which is the principal town and shopping center of the area. At the time there had been some jocular speculation that Munnu Babu had been reborn as Punkaj, but Punkaj's family members seem not to have considered this possibility seriously until Punkaj began to speak about the previous life.

Punkaj's father had had a slight acquaintance with Munnu Babu, but the two families were separated in physical distance, in wealth (Munnu Babu's family was

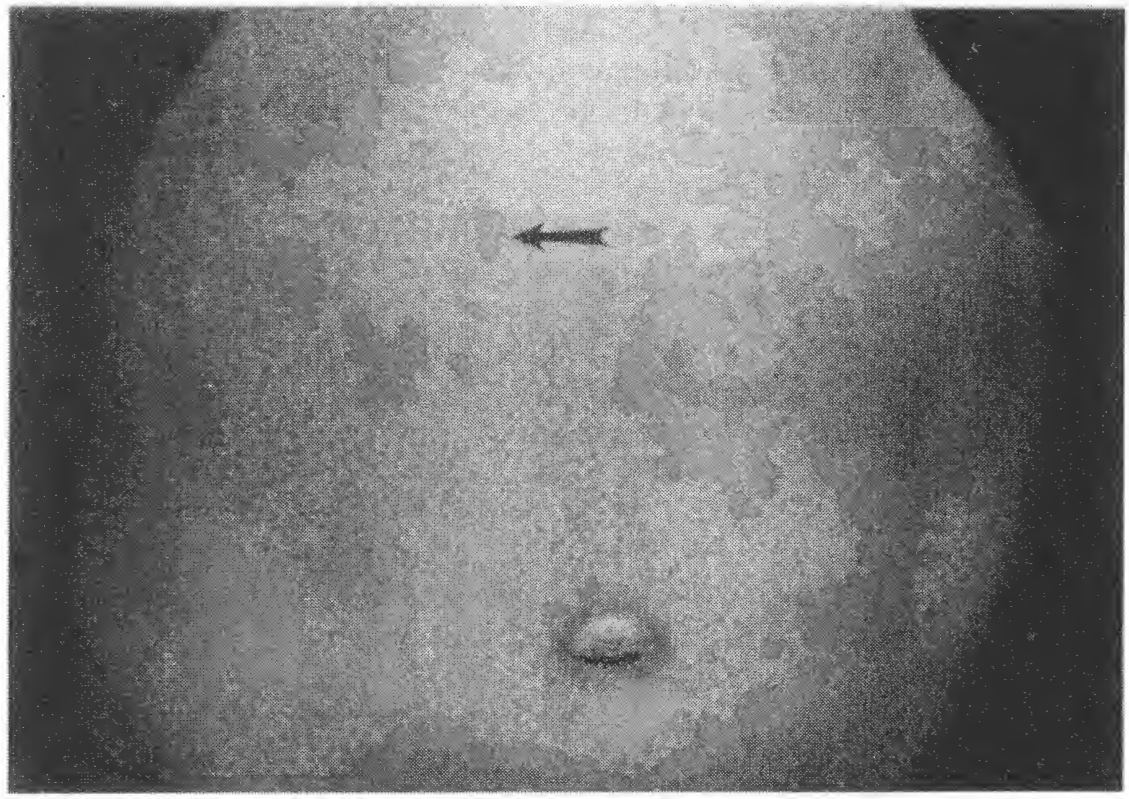

Figure 14-5 Birthmark on the right upper abdomen of Punkaj Chauhan as it appeared in February 1983, when he was 8 years old. The birthmark was a round hyperpigmented macule about 1-1.5 centimeters in diameter. It was located in the 11 o'clock position in relation to the umbilicus, near the costal margin. A scar (probably of a furuncle) can be seen superior to the umbilicus.

rich, Punkaj's was not), and in caste (Punkaj's family was of a higher caste than Munnu Babu's). They had no social relationships.

Because Munnu Babu's family were wealthy and prominent, the people of the area knew much about them, and Punkaj made few, if any, statements about matters that were not generally known in the area. For this reason, and because of the considerable wealth of Munnu Babu's family, a suspicion arose that perhaps Punkaj's family had taught him to say that he was Munnu Babu. This seems extremely unlikely. At the age of only about 3 years, when he made his single visit to Bhoor Nagaria, he fully satisfied Munnu Babu's wife with the knowledge he showed of their family; she did not believe he had been coached. Moreover, Punkaj's family never made the slightest demand on Munnu Babu's. On the contrary, they even discouraged Punkaj from returning to Bhoor Nagaria after his one visit there; and they took some mild measures to suppress his talk about the previous life.

Dr. Satwant Pasricha and I first learned of this case in February 1980, when we were in Bewar for the investigation of other cases. We had an opportunity then for an extremely brief meeting with Punkaj's mother. However, in March 1980,

Dr. Pasricha began a series of interviews with members of both families concerned. She continued the investigation in December 1980. In December 1981, she located and copied relevant portions of the report of the postmortem examination of Munnu Babu. I worked on the case with Dr. Pasricha in February 1983 and again in November 1988. In the latter month we went to Bhoor Nagaria, where we tried to obtain an eyewitness account of Munnu Babu's murder; unfortunately, the only firsthand witness was drunk on the day of our visit to Bhoor Nagaria, and we heard only a secondhand account.

In December 1988, Dr. Pasricha again met Punkaj's mother and Punkaj himself in Bewar. We can say, therefore, that we had this case under investigation for almost 9 years; and yet aspects of the evidence in it remain unsatisfactory. I am, however, satisfied concerning the authenticity of the case. Omitting much detail that has less immediate interest, I come now to several features of the case that bear on Punkaj's (presumed) birthmark: what he said about how Munnu Babu was killed, the postmortem examination of Munnu Babu's body, and the secondhand evidence we obtained about Munnu Babu's murder.

Punkaj's Statements about How Munnu Babu was Killed

According to Pushpa Kumari (speaking in 1980), Punkaj said: "I was bending over and cleaning the Jeep. Someone shot me from behind. I took out my revolver. After that I do not remember." (In 1988 Pushpa Kumari made a closely similar statement about what Punkaj had said.)

According to Satyapal Singh (also speaking in 1980), Punkaj had said: "When I was checking the vehicle, they shot me." As Punkaj spoke, he pointed toward his right abdomen. Satyapal added: "He only told about the mark in the front."

Rena, one of Punkaj's older sisters, recalled (also in 1980) that Punkaj had said that he was shot in the back "through the stomach."

To complete the reports under this heading I will mention that Munnu Babu's widow told Dr. Pasricha that Punkaj had pointed to his neck and had also indicated the "left side" as places where Munnu Babu had been wounded.

Punkaj's Birthmark

Punkaj's birthmark (Figure 14-5) was a roundish hyperpigmented macule in the right upper quadrant of his abdomen. It was about 1-1.5 centimeters in diameter. I have already mentioned that his parents did not notice it until he began to point to his abdomen and say that (as Munnu Babu) he had been shot there.

Punkaj's sister Rena (older than Punkaj by 9 years) said that he had two birthmarks, one on the abdomen and one on the back. Punkaj's father thought there was a mark at his back also, but if so, this mark had faded before 1983. I found nothing like a birthmark there. In contrast, the presumed birthmark on Punkaj's abdomen was still visible in 1983.

The Report of the Postmortem on Munnu Babu

The essential details of the postmortem report were the following:

1. Gunshot wound of entry 1 inch by 1 inch, brain deep on the back of the skull, in the occipital region...direction from back to front.
2. Gunshot wound of entry 1½ inch by 1 inch, chest cavity deep, on the back in the scapular region in its lateral aspect. The direction of the wound is from left to right and from above downwards.
3. Gunshot wound of entry 1 inch by ¾ inch, abdominal cavity deep with right lower part of the chest in the back. The direction of the wound is from right to left and from below upwards. [This is ambiguous. I have interpreted it, unconfidently, to mean that the wound of entry was in the right upper abdomen.]

The report mentioned a number of smaller gunshot wounds on the back and on the back of the hand. It also noted five small exit wounds on the left front of the chest. Both lungs had been "lacerated" and the heart "cut through." The liver and both the large and small intestines had all been "lacerated."

Wadding was found in each of the three major wounds, and 12 shotgun pellets were recovered. Death was attributed to shock and hemorrhage.

Comment. Although the pathologist described the wounds as "gunshot wounds," the weapons used are more accurately described as shotguns. This is clear from the occurrence of multiple exit wounds and the recovery inside the body of 12 pellets.

The several single large wounds of entry and the recovery of wadding (from the cartridges) inside the wounds tell us that the weapons were discharged at a close range from the victim (Di Maio, 1985). (Figures 6-27, 12-7, and 13-14 show wounds made by shotguns discharged at close ranges.)

As usual, the pathologist did not try to describe the order in which the wounds were inflicted. We can, however, make a deduction about this from the direction of the abdominal wound, which, the pathologist said, was from below upwards. For this type of wound to occur Munnu Babu could have been standing and the assailant crouching so that he fired upwards. This seems unlikely. It is more probable that Munnu Babu was lying on the ground already wounded, and the assailant fired at him while standing over him at, say, the level of Munnu Babu's knees.

Rajender Singh Yadav said that medical testimony in the trial of the murderers was corrupted, but I cannot see internal evidence of this in the postmortem report. It suggests to me that the abdominal wound was inflicted while Munnu Babu was lying on the ground, and therefore after he had received one or both of the other wounds, Numbers 1 and 2 of the pathologist's report.

The Secondhand Account of the Murder of Munnu Babu

As I mentioned, the only eyewitness to the crime was drunk on the day in November 1988 when Dr. Pasricha and I went to Bhoor Nagaria. We could hear

only the secondhand account of Narender Singh, Munnu Babu's younger brother, who told us what the eyewitness had told him about the sequence of events. This was that Munnu Babu's Jeep was not working well, and he was sitting in the driver's seat trying vainly to get it started, when the murderers approached him from behind and fired at him through the back of the Jeep. (The scene was to some extent reenacted for us with a Jeep that was standing at the house when we went there; Indian Jeeps are open at the back and do not usually have closed bodies, such as modern American Jeeps usually have.) The first shot hit Munnu Babu at the back of the head (corresponding to wound Number 1 of the pathologist's report). He then either fell out of the Jeep or tried to get out himself; then he was shot twice more in the back and abdomen.

Comment on the Occurrence of a Single Birthmark on Punkaj's Upper Abdomen

I said earlier that the several weaknesses of this case—failure to note the birthmark at Punkaj's birth, possible faked medical evidence, and absence of a firsthand witness to the murder—tempted me to omit a report of this case. I decided to include it because such evidence as we have tends to negate my hypothesis that wounds received up to the moment when consciousness ceases may correspond to birthmarks whereas wounds received after consciousness is lost do not. The wound on the abdomen was probably inflicted third or at least second, after the wound at the back of the head. On my hypothesis I should have expected Punkaj to have had birthmarks on his neck and left back as well as, or perhaps instead of, the one on his abdomen.

Relevant here is the emphasis that Punkaj himself gave to the wound of the abdomen. Although he said that he was shot from behind, he pointed to his abdomen as the site where Munnu Babu was wounded. Somehow that wound seems to have become dominant in his consciousness. Perhaps it had been dominant in the mind of Munnu Babu as he was dying. Stunned by the wound to his head—if that was the first wound he received—he may have turned and faced his assassins. He may then have fallen to the ground on his back and looked up at them. If the shot wounding him in the abdomen was the second shot fired and was fired at Munnu Babu as he lay on the ground, he might have had a clear view of the man who fired that shot. (Punkaj's mother and sister said that he had named at least one of the murderers, although they had forgotten the name by the time of our interviews, and we do not know whether it was correct.) The visual image of a man about to fire a shotgun at him at close range could have enhanced Munnu Babu's memory for the ensuing wound. I shall return to the possible importance of such concentration of attention later, in Chapter 26.

Before leaving Punkaj's case, I will mention that he may have had no birthmark whatever that corresponded to the wound on Munnu Babu's abdomen. It could have happened that after he pointed to his abdomen, members of the family noticed a hyperpigmented macule having some other provenance than a previous

life and focused attention on it. This would make the case similar to that of Vasantha Gunasekera (Chapter 13), whose family also did not notice any mark on him until he began to speak about a previous life. The important difference between the two cases is that the mark noticed on Vasantha's chest did not correspond to a wound on the deceased person whose life he remembered, whereas the mark on Punkaj's abdomen did correspond to such a wound.

The Possible Importance of the First Shock in a Fatal Wounding

Sometimes birthmarks correspond to a wound received first, but not to a later one, even though the later one may have occurred while the wounded person was still conscious, although near death. The case of Tali Sowaid may provide an example. He had birthmarks corresponding to the bullet wounds of entry and exit on Said Abul-Hisn, but none that corresponded to the tracheostomy opening that was made when Said was in the hospital in Beirut. Admittedly, the tracheostomy (and repair of Said's damaged jaw and tongue) were made under general anesthesia; but afterward Said recovered consciousness, at least partly. Tali had a memory of falling out of bed in the hospital just before dying.

In several cases in which the previous personality fell head first onto a hard surface or received a blow on the head, death was presumably due to brain injury or a fractured neck. Nevertheless, the birthmark occurred at the point of first impact. An abrasion might have occurred there, but it was not always recorded and perhaps sometimes not even noticed. The cases of Nirankar Bhatnagar (unverified), Wilfred Meares, Sunita Khandelwal, Dellâl Beyaz, and Maung Zaw Thein Lwin illustrate this feature.

Birthmarks Corresponding to Postmortem Markings and Injuries

The loss of consciousness that I discussed in a preceding section appears, in some cases, to be succeeded by another phase of sensitivity to marks made on the body after death. Many of the cases of experimental birthmarks that I described in Chapter 10 strongly suggest such a period of postmortem sensitivity when a mark made on the physical body corresponded to a birthmark on a later-born person. Although in 7, and perhaps 8, of the 20 cases summarized in Table 10-4 the mark had been made on the deceased person as he or she was dying, in the remaining 12 cases it was made after the person was judged to have died.

The birthmark on the right side of the front of Metin Köybaşı's neck corresponded to an incision made postmortem when the pathologist found and extracted a bullet that had lodged beneath the skin.

A few cases have occurred in which a dead body has been inadvertently injured before its burial, and a later-born baby has had a birthmark at the site of the injury on the deceased person and later (sometimes) expressed memories of that person's life. We have information about five cases of this type. I describe one (Faris Yuyucuer) in a later section of this work. Here I will describe two other cases of the group.

THE CASE OF CHAMROON KAOCHAMNONG

Summary of the Case and Its Investigation

Chamroon Kaochamnong was born in Tahrua, Tambon Naimung, Nakhon Sri Thammaraj Province, Thailand, on August 20, 1965. He was the seventh of the ten children of his parents, Chamnai Kaochamnong and his wife, Pian. Chamnai was a trader.

At his birth, Chamroon was found to have a prominent birthmark at the top of his head (Figure 14-6). This and nothing else led his father to think that Chamroon was the reincarnation of the sixth child in the family, a boy who had died at the age of 7 days. This baby was unnamed when he died, and so I shall call him Baby Nai. Chamnai had inadvertently injured Baby Nai's head (at the site of Chamroon's birthmark) as he was preparing the dead baby's body for burial. Chamroon was born about 18 months after Baby Nai's death.

I learned of this case when I was in southern Thailand in 1974 for the investigation of other cases. My informant for it was Bunchote Chantong, a resident of Nakhon Sri Thammaraj and at that time Secretary of the local Buddhist Society. On November 20, 1974, I went to Tahrua and met Chamroon and his parents. Professor Kloom Vajropala and Nasib Sirorasa interpreted for me. Chamroon's father, Chamnai, was our principal informant for the few facts the case has.

In October 1985 Nasib Sirorasa met some members of the family again and obtained some additional information about the case for this report. She met Pian Kaochamnong and Chamroon's older sister Sukontha; but Chamroon himself and his father were both away.

The Injury to Baby Nai's Head

After Baby Nai died, Chamnai made a simple wooden coffin (without a lid) in which he buried the baby's body. When he had completed the little coffin, it seemed somewhat weak at the head end. He therefore added another piece of wood at that end. In doing this he drove a nail right through the end of the coffin. Chamnai then took the baby in the coffin to the cemetery. When he arrived there, he looked at the baby in the coffin before burying it and noticed to his chagrin that the nail protruding into the interior of the coffin at the head end had injured the dead baby's head. With the coffin at rest the nail would not have injured the baby's head, but the inevitable jostling during the transport to the cemetery had led to the head striking the nail and being injured by it.[8]

[8]In 1985 Chamroon's older sister Sukontha told Nasib Sirorasa that Baby Nai's head was injured as it was being placed in its little coffin, not by a nail her father had driven into the coffin. At the time of Nasib Sirorasa's visit to the family, Chamnai Kaochamnong was away from home, and so Nasib Sirorasa could not ask him to repeat his account of how Baby Nai's head had been injured. Sukontha was herself a child of only 8 at the time Baby Nai died, and I prefer her father's account *(continued)*

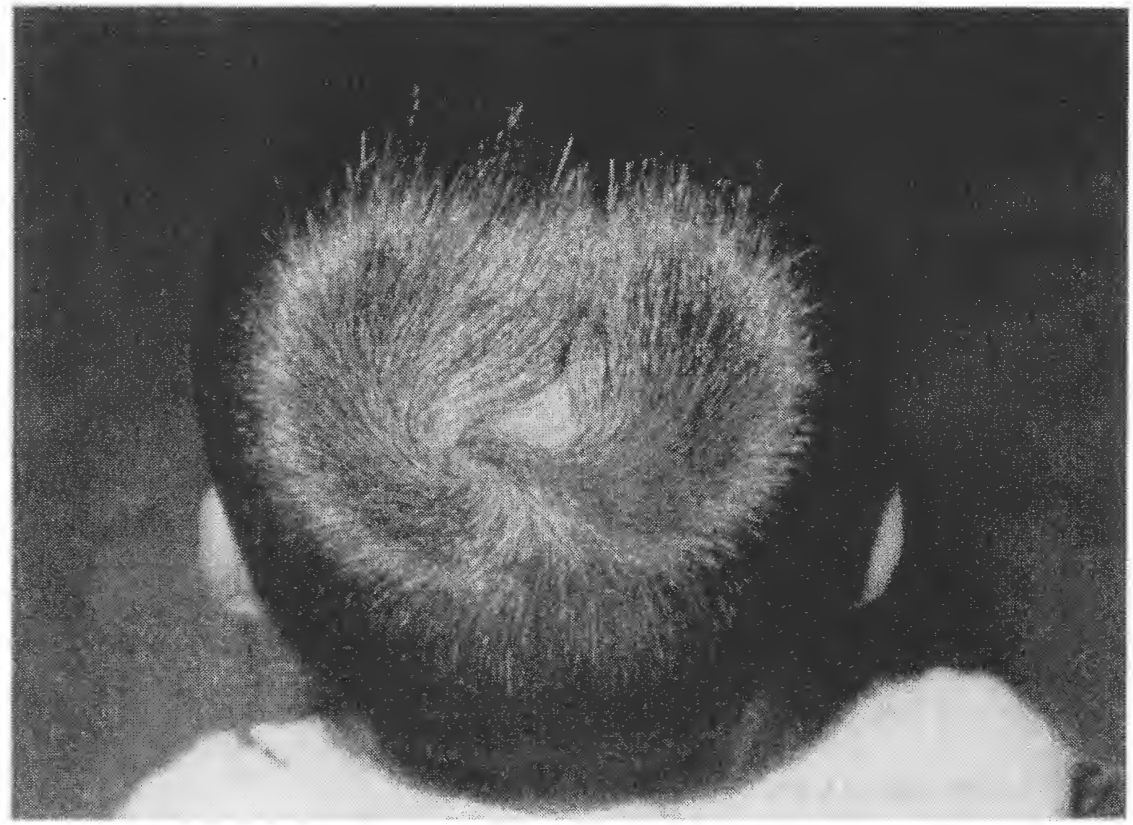

Figure 14-6 Birthmark on Chamroon Kaochamnong as it appeared in November 1974, when he was a few months more than 9 years old. The birthmark was a roundish, hairless, slightly puckered, and slightly hypopigmented area, approximately 1 centimeter in diameter.

Chamnai buried the baby in its coffin and seems not to have thought much more about the injury to the baby's head at the time. He did not even mention it to his wife, although he did tell Pian's sister what had happened, and she told Pian. He also did not predict that a later-born baby of the family would have a birthmark at the site where the nail had injured Baby Nai's head. When Chamroon was born, however, and was found to have a birthmark on his head at the site where Baby Nai's head had been injured, Chamnai began to think that Chamroon might be the reincarnation of Baby Nai.

Chamroon's Birthmark

Figure 14-6 shows that Chamroon's birthmark was a circular, hairless area nearly in the midline of the parietal part of scalp. The area was approximately 1 centimeter in diameter. It was neither elevated nor depressed compared with the surrounding skin. It was slightly puckered and had less pigment than the surrounding skin. It had the appearance of a healed scar.

[8]*(continued)* of what happened to hers. They agree about the principal fact: that of some postmortem injury to Baby Nai's head.

Pian said that Chamroon's birthmark was not bleeding or oozing when he was born, and it had not changed in appearance since then.

Other Relevant Medical Information. Pian said that her pregnancy with Chamroon was normal. So was her delivery, and no instruments were used.

Additional Information

Chamroon had no memories of a previous life.

In November 1974, Chamroon was a few months over 9 years old. He was then a pupil in the third grade of school. He said that he had never had any pain in the area of the birthmark.

His mother, Pian, said that no other member of the family had a birthmark like Chamroon's.

In 1985 when Nasib Sirorasa visited the family, Chamroon, then a young man of 20, was in Bangkok, and she did not see him. His sister Sukontha said that she thought Chamroon's birthmark had become slightly bigger than it had been when he was younger.

THE CASE OF MA PYONE YI

Ma Pyone Yi was born in Myaukthike village, Tatkon Township, Upper Burma, on March 22, 1970. Her parents were U Shwe Byaing and his wife, Daw Ohn Myine. She was the eighth of their ten children. U Shwe Byaing was a farmer.

When Ma Pyone Yi was born, a birthmark was noticed on her forehead (Figure 14-7), but her parents did not attach any significance to it until she began to speak. They did, however, believe that she was the reincarnation of her father's mother, Daw Ain Thi. They came to this conclusion partly because Daw Ohn Myine had dreamed of Daw Ain Thi after her death; in the dream Daw Ain Thi had said that she was coming to live with them, meaning Daw Ohn Myine and U Shwe Byaing. In addition, Ma Pyone Yi had birthmarks on her legs, which her aunt Daw Ma Kalay Ma said corresponded to ulcers that Daw Ain Thi had had on her legs at the time she died. Daw Ain Thi had died about a year before Ma Pyone Yi's birth. Her legs had been swollen as well as ulcerated. Daw Ain Thi had been married to U Yone Gyi. When Ma Pyone Yi was about one year old, U Yone Gyi and his daughter, Daw Ma Kalay Ma (U Shwe Byaing's sister), adopted her, and she had lived with them since then.

When Ma Pyone Yi became able to speak, she told Daw Ma Kalay Ma that she was her mother, and she was pleased when members of the family called her "mother." Sometimes, when they did not call her "mother," she would not respond.

Ma Pyone Yi told her family that the birthmark on her head was caused during the burial of Daw Ain Thi, when the gravedigger had struck Daw Ain Thi's body with a spade.

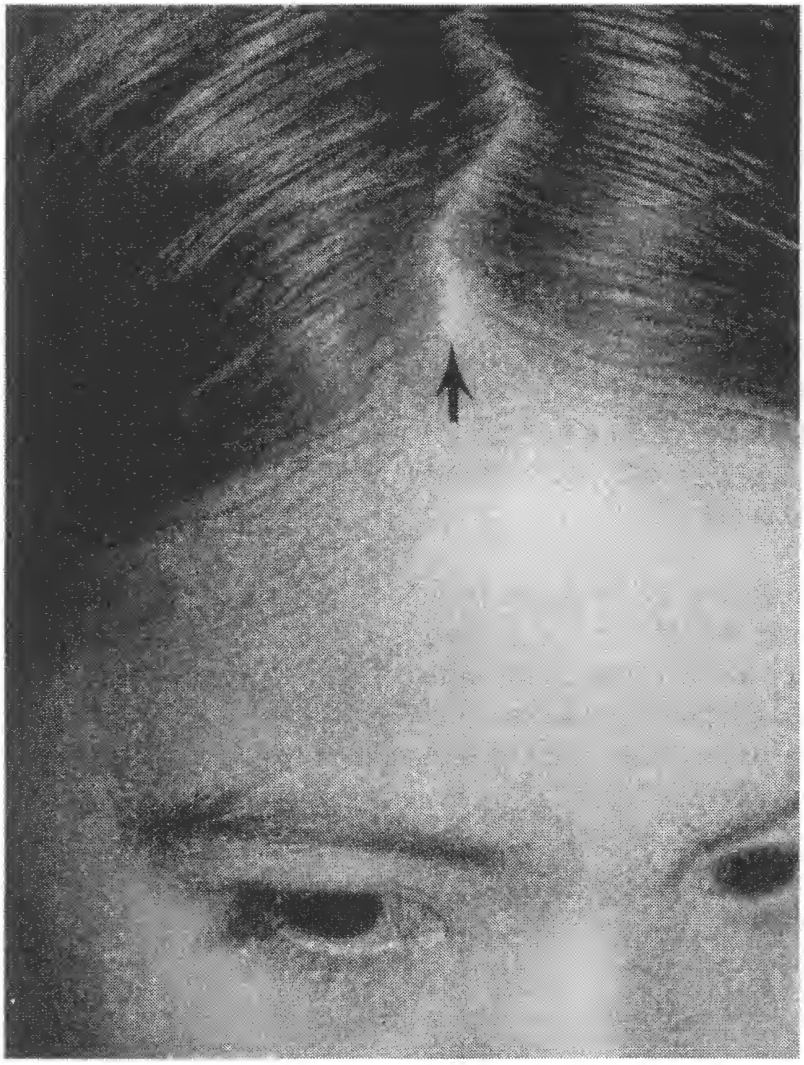

Figure 14-7 Birthmark on Ma Pyone Yi as it appeared in July 1978, when she was 8½ years old. The birthmark was a hairless area, lenticular in shape, in the midline of the forehead just at the hairline. It was about 1 centimeter long and about 4 millimeters wide at its widest.

Ma Pyone Yi was considerate and respectful toward U Yone Gyi, but she could be imperious and rude toward Daw Ma Kalay Ma. Sometimes Daw Ma Kalay Ma became angry with Ma Pyone Yi and suggested that she should go home, that is, to her parents' home. To this Ma Pyone Yi would reply: "You go away. I won't. This is *my* house."

U Win Maung made a preliminary investigation of this case in July 1978 when he interviewed Daw Ohn Myine and photographed Ma Pyone Yi. I thought we should try to obtain more information about the case, and Daw Hnin Aye returned to Myaukthike village in 1986 or 1987; her notes are not dated.

Daw Ohn Myine was out of the village when Daw Hnin Aye went there, but she was able to meet U Yone Gyi and Daw Ma Kalay Ma. Some of the information I have given above came from these later interviews. I have not myself met Ma Pyone Yi or the other informants for the case.

U Yone Gyi said that he had been standing some yards away at the time Daw Ain Thi's body was buried, and he could not say whether the gravedigger had struck her body with a spade. Thus Ma Pyone Yi's statement on this matter remains unverified.

Ma Pyone Yi's Birthmark

Figure 14-7 shows Ma Pyone Yi's birthmark as it appeared in July 1978, when she was 8½ years old. The birthmark was a lenticular area of hairlessness on the upper edge of the forehead near the midline and at the hairline. It was about 1 centimeter long and about 4 millimeters wide at its widest.

Daw Hnin Aye said that by the time of her visit the birthmarks on Ma Pyone Yi's legs had faded.

The foregoing by no means includes all that we can report about correlates between the birthmarks and birth defects on the one hand and other features or circumstances of the cases on the other. I defer a presentation and discussion of the additional relationships, however, until Chapter 26. This will enable me to take account there of the many cases whose subjects had birth defects and other physical features apparently related to previous lives.

15

The Interpretations of Birthmarks Related to Previous Lives

INTRODUCTION

Before considering the various interpretations of the birthmarks I have described, I will first make four points—some repeating what I have said before, but needing to be brought into the foreground now.

I wish first to disclaim any pretension to have an explanation for *every* birthmark someone may have. Most birthmarks would remain unexplained, even if we believe the ones reported in this work permit, or even require, some paranormal process for their understanding. Apart from the numerous hyperpigmented macules and elevated nevi of which nearly everyone has some examples, other unusual birthmarks occur also without any obvious explanation or with a normal one. As an example, I show in Figure 15-1 a birthmark on a 5½-year-old American boy, Theodore Sellers, of Laramie, Wyoming. Theodore had some fragmentary memories of a previous life, and that is why I learned about him. These possible memories were not specific enough to permit verification. Moreover, they gave no indication of how he had died in the presumed previous life. He had a birthmark on the top of his head, but he never indicated it as having any connection with the previous life he seemed to remember. Theodore was his mother's first (and only) child, and she had had a prolonged labor lasting 23 hours when he was born. A pediatrician suggested that his birthmark derived

Figure 15-1 Birthmark on top of the head of Theodore Sellers as it appeared in November 1982, when he was 5½ years old. Although Theodore had unverified memories of a previous life, neither he nor his parents related this birthmark to a previous life. It was probably a pressure necrosis, the consequence of a prolonged labor during his birth.

from abrasive contact between Theodore's head and his mother's pelvic tissues during her labor. Dr. Kenneth Greer, my consultant in dermatology, concurred in the likelihood of this explanation. The condition, usually known as pressure necrosis, occurs most commonly in firstborn infants delivered at term (Hodgman et al., 1971, p. 725).

I made the second point that I wish to emphasize here when I introduced the cases of experimental birthmarks in Chapter 10. I there mentioned that few of the many nevi that most persons have are present at birth; they develop in later child-

hood and adulthood (Pack and Davis, 1956). Nevertheless, some *are* present at birth, and as many as 2.4% (Pack and Davis, 1956) or even 2.7% (Pratt, 1953) of newborn infants have one or more.

My third point—one that I made in Chapter 1—is that, although hyperpigmented macules and other nevi do figure in some of the cases with which this work is concerned, most of the birthmarks I have described are not in this group. Instead, the majority of them (apart from the experimental birthmarks) have such other features as hypopigmentation, a puckered scarlike appearance, hairlessness, and a tendency to be depressed below the surrounding skin as often as they are elevated above it. (Nevi tend to be flat or elevated above the surrounding skin.) In addition, many of the birthmarks with which this work is concerned have unusual sizes, shapes, and details that are lacking in commonly observed birthmarks.

Finally, I wish to remind my readers that one of the principal purposes of this work is that of beginning to explain why a person has the *particular* birthmarks he or she has and not others. I think that it contributes to our understanding of the causes of the uniqueness of each human being. The birthmarks contribute to that uniqueness in the persons having them; the birthmarks themselves correspond to unique experiences had by a deceased person, and perhaps they have arisen from these experiences.

THE NORMAL INTERPRETATION OF THE CASES: ACAUSAL COINCIDENCE

If 2.5% of newborn babies have a birthmark—let it be of any kind—we should expect that many babies would have one at any particular site, and many would have one at the site where a deceased person had been wounded. If, however, *two* birthmarks correspond to two wounds on a deceased person, the likelihood of coincidence becomes much reduced. Table 15-1 lists the subjects of 34 verified cases who had two or more birthmarks related to a previous life. I have listed only cases described (or at least briefly mentioned) so far in this work. Later sections of the work add many more cases to this group, but the cases here listed will suffice for the point I wish to make. I have not included in the list any of the cases with birthmarks corresponding to holes for earrings, although these subjects had birthmarks on both ears.

We can assess the probability of a person's having two birthmarks that correspond in location with two wounds (or marks) on another person. The surface area of the skin of an average adult male is 1.6 square meters (Spalteholz, 1943). Let us imagine this area spread onto a flat surface in the form of a square. The sides of the square would each be approximately 127 centimeters long. If we divide the area of this square into smaller squares each having sides 10 centimeters long, the larger square would contain the equivalent of about 160 such smaller squares. The probability that a person will have a single birthmark corresponding in location to a wound within the area of any of the 160 smaller

Table 15-1. **Subjects of Verified Cases Having Two or More Birthmarks**

Subject	*Unusual Details*	*Medical Document Verified Wounds on Previous Personality*
1. Maung Tin Win	Birthmark corresponding to wound of entry small and round; birthmark corresponding to wound of exit larger and irregular in shape	
2. Chanai Choomalaiwong	Birthmark corresponding to wound of entry small and round; birthmark corresponding to wound of exit larger and irregular in shape	
3. Ali Uğurlu		
4. Yvonne Ehrlich		
5. Necip Ünlütaşkıran		Yes
6. Metin Köybaşı		Yes
7. Alan Gamble	Birthmark corresponding to wound of entry smaller than birthmark corresponding to wound of exit	Yes
8. Sunita Singh	Long, narrow birthmark extending for about 12 centimeters	Yes
9. Narong Yensiri		Yes
10. Tali Sowaid	Birthmark corresponding to wound of entry smaller than birthmark corresponding to wound of exit	Yes
11. Maung Win Aung		

12. Dorabeth Crosby		
13. Cemil Fahrici	Birthmark corresponding to wound of entry smaller than birthmark corresponding to wound of exit	
14. Semir Taci	Hypertrophic keloid appearance	Yes
15. William George, Jr.		
16. Ma Tin Aung	Both birthmarks were experimental	
17. Ma Choe Hnin Htet	One birthmark was a long, linear area of hypopigmentation; one birthmark was experimental	Yes
18. Maung Myint Khine	One birthmark was experimental	
19. Ma Win Win Nyunt	Rectangular shape corresponding to mark that adhesive tape would make on skin	
20. Frank Dudley		
21. Bhopal Singh		Yes
22. Faris Yuyucuer		
23. Corliss Chotkin, Jr.	One birthmark had tiny marks lateral to main birthmark that corresponded to surgical wounds of stitches	Yes (for one birthmark)
24. Tong In Songcham	Three narrow birthmarks each about 6-8 centimeters long	
25. Semihe Atasoy	Birthmarks corresponded to bullet wounds of entry and exit	Yes

Table 15-1. *(continued)*

Subject	*Unusual Details*	*Medical Document Verified Wounds on Previous Personality*
26. Sabahattin Büyükaşik		
27. Chidiebere Udenta		
28. Maung Mhat Tin		
29. Ma Khin Hsann Oo		
30. Ma Khin Sandi	One birthmark was experimental	
31. Ma Mar Aye		
32. Toran Singh		Yes
33. Nihayet Düzel		

squares is only 1/160.[1] However, the probability of his or her having *two* such birthmarks in corresponding different squares would be 1/160 × 1/160, or 1 in 25,600. In making this calculation I have used a generously large area for the smaller squares imagined: 10 centimeters by 10 centimeters. For many of our subjects the correspondence in location between wound and birthmark is much closer than squares of this size require. For example, the central point of the birthmark on Hanumant Saxena's chest was less than 5 centimeters from the central point of the shotgun wounds that killed Maha Ram Singh (established by the postmortem report); and the distance between the site of the birthmarks and the sites of wounds in the case of Chanai Choomalaiwong (although we have no postmortem report in his case) would have been even less than 5 centimeters. In cases with the sites of wound and birthmark within areas of 5 square centimeters, our hypothetical sheet of skin measuring 1.6 square meters would contain the equivalent of about 645 squares, each 5 centimeters square. In such a case the probability of two birthmarks corresponding in location with two wounds would be 1/645 × 1/645, which is 1 in 416,025. Figure 15-2 (reproduced here for convenience from Figure 13-1) shows a human adult represented as 1.75 meters tall. The two squares drawn on the right chest represent areas 10 centimeters square and 5 centimeters square.

The calculation of probability by itself takes no account of two other factors in a case. First, it does not allow for the unusual details corresponding to wounds or other marks that many of the birthmarks have. I devoted Chapter 12 entirely to a discussion of such details, and I hope that I was able to show that, although we cannot handle this feature quantitatively, we must not ignore it on that account. These details are an important part of the unusualness of the birthmarks with which we are here concerned. In Table 15-1 I have noted the existence of such unusual details in 12 of the 33 cases. Table 15-1 also reminds readers that we obtained verifying medical documents for 12 of these 33 cases.

Second, a calculation of probability by itself tells nothing of the context in which these birthmarks occur. I refer to all the other features that occur in nearly every case, especially statements by the subject expressing claimed memories of a previous life and associated unusual behavior that harmonizes with what was

[1]This estimation assumes that birthmarks occur with the same frequency on all parts of the skin. In fact, Pack et al. (1952) showed that nevi (pigmented moles, in their terminology) occur appreciably more often on the head and neck, the upper extremities, and the trunk than on the lower extremities. Apart from the paucity of moles on the top of the head (mentioned further below) and the lower extremities (where few of the birthmarks with which this work is concerned occurred), the differences in the incidence of moles in different regions of the body are not sufficient to affect the interpretation of the estimates that I make in this section.

The data of Pack et al. show that pigmented moles almost never occur above the hairline on the head. Readers will have noted, however, that several subjects of cases already described in this work had birthmarks in this area. These included: Nirankar Bhatnagar, Daw Aye Myint, Chanai Choomalaiwong, Necip Ünlütaşkıran, Dellâl Beyaz, Cemil Fahrici, Umar Khan, Wilfred Meares, and Sunita Khandelwal. (Not all of these had hyperpigmented nevi [moles]; some had scarlike hairless areas.)

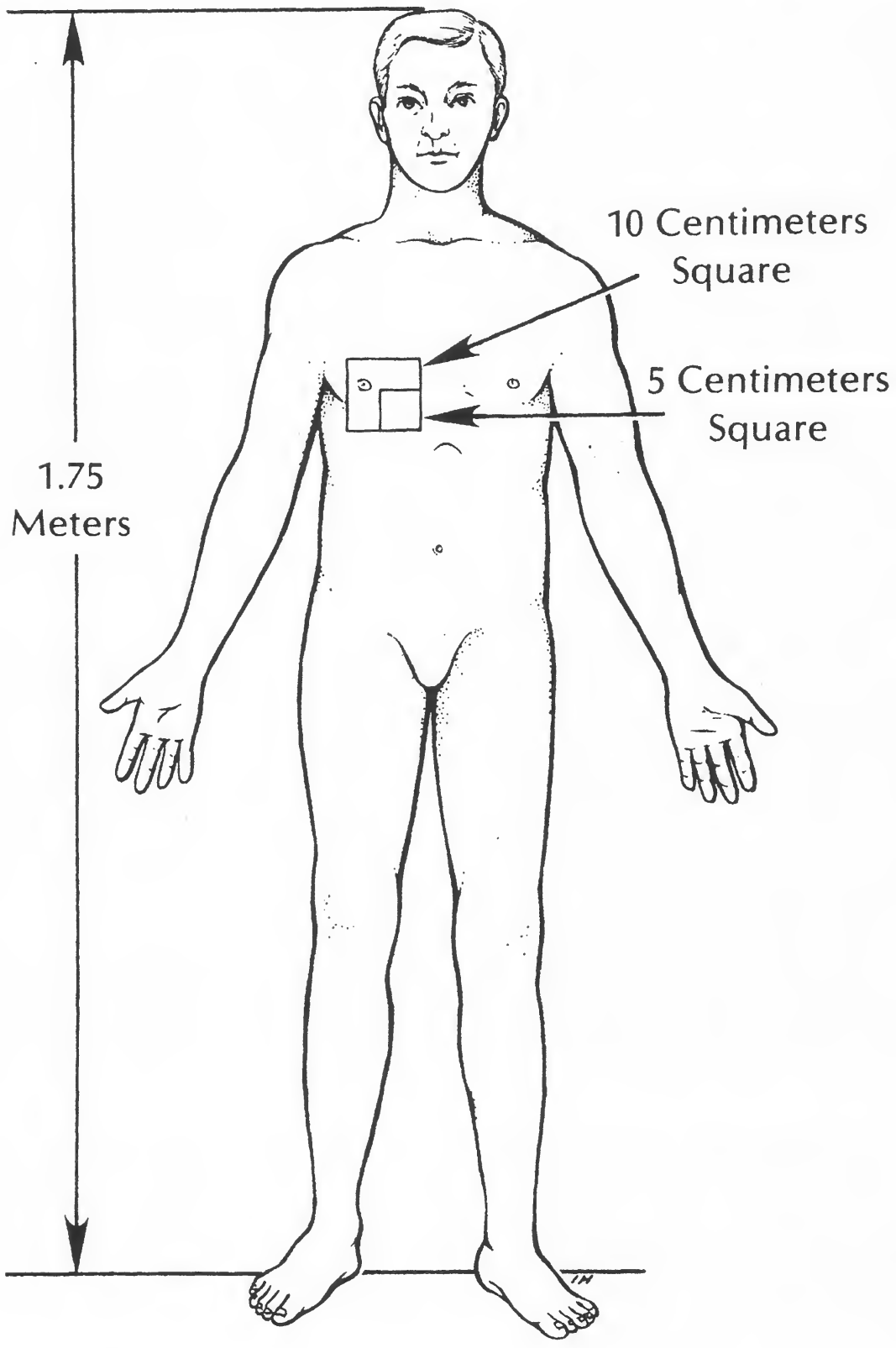

Figure 15-2 Human figure drawing of a person represented as 1.75 meters in height. The squares on the right chest show the proportionate size on such a person of areas 5 centimeters square and 10 centimeters square.

known or could be conjectured about the person whose life the child claims to remember. Proponents of acausal coincidence as an interpretation for the birthmarks cannot avoid the need to explain the child's statements and related behavior. To explain these features they must ascribe them to a fantasy, so that the term for this interpretation becomes not just "chance," but "chance and fantasy." The complete interpretation supposes that the subject of the case has a fantasy about a previous life that he or she did not in fact live. The fantasy explains the birthmarks and is more or less built around them. Such a fantasy could be of one or the other of two types. In unsolved cases we could call it a "pure fantasy," because no deceased person matching the child's statements has been found. Where such a person has been found—as happens in about two-thirds of the cases—we can speak of a "fantasied identification."

I will not repeat here all the grounds for believing that in solved cases—with occasional exceptions—we are not concerned with fantasies.[2] I have tried to show my reasons for believing this in the details that I have given in the case reports. To be sure, we have found in a few cases parents or other informants amplifying aspects of a case or closing prematurely the search for the person correctly matching a subject's statements (Stevenson, Pasricha, and Samararatne, 1988). Most of the persons concerned in these cases, however, lack the time and the opportunities for imposing an identification on the child that it does not want; even more, they lack any motive for doing so. As I explained in Chapter 1, the informants, living as most of them do in countries where the belief in reincarnation is strong, interpret birthmarks they notice, almost automatically, as being derived from *some* previous life. It matters little or nothing to them from *what* previous life the birthmarks derive. I will not say this is true of all cases, because in many—and this feature varies in different cultures—parents do have a keen interest in identifying the correct previous personality, and therefore they would welcome (and even encourage) confirmation from a child's statements of the judgment they may already have formed on the basis of the birthmarks.

We must note also that some of the previous personalities have been eminent, wealthy, and noble or in other respects have occupied positions superior to those of the subjects' families. Children or their parents might well find such persons models to be envied and imitated. There are other cases, however, where the opposite is true. Many of the previous personalities have been drunkards, brigands, or poverty-stricken; some have belonged (according to the child's statements) to a foreign people, such as the Japanese were in Burma. None of these groups provide admirable models for fantasied identifications.

There certainly are a few cases in which a combination of chance (for the occurrence of the birthmark) and parental expectation and encouragement (for the child to identify with a particular deceased person) provides an almost uncontro-

[2]We cannot say this of unsolved cases, many or all of which may be "pure fantasies." Yet these cases provide an even weaker motive for exaggeration or distortion than do solved cases. Little credit can come to subjects or their families from claimed memories that are completely unverified.

versially obvious explanation. Examples occur in the (same-family) cases of Huriye Bugay, William George, Jr., Cemal Kurt, and Maung Sein Nyunt. In these and a few other cases we cannot exclude a genetic factor as accounting for the occurrence of similar birthmarks in two members of the same family. Moreover, in each of these cases dreams or other indications prepared the subject's parents to notice behavior on the part of the subject that was similar to that of the identified previous personality; and they may have encouraged and even stimulated the statements about the previous life that they later attributed to the subject.

Still, such cases are only a tiny handful in our entire collection. I would willingly sacrifice them all to skeptics, if in turn the skeptics would agree to examine carefully the evidence in the much more numerous cases in which there can be no question of a genetic factor in the occurrence of the birthmark or any possibility—so far as our investigations could determine—that the subject's parents had normal knowledge of the concerned deceased person before the subject began referring to him or her. In order to explain away these cases a critic must suppose that the informants have ruinously distorted the facts in their presentations to us. In solved cases in which the two families were unacquainted before the case developed, we confront at least a nucleus, and usually much more, of verified fact. Our question for these cases is therefore that of whether the informants may have remembered the principal events so inadequately as to seriously weaken or destroy our confidence in their statements. Memories may become modified with the passage of time altogether apart from any motive to improve a case. It is unfortunately true that my associates and I often reached the cases months, years, and sometimes decades after the case had developed. In fewer than 1% of all our cases has someone made a written record of what the subject said before verification of his or her statements; and this has not been true in a single case of the present work. Nevertheless, I do not think this deficiency damaging to our acceptance of the accuracy of the informants for the main events they are remembering when we interview them.

In Chapter 13 I reviewed the best evidence we have bearing on this point: comparisons of oral informants' testimonies with the written records of postmortem reports. This showed that, although we may be misled (for this information) in (I estimated) 12% of cases, we will not be misled in 88%. I cannot say how far we can extrapolate this result to the informants' memories about other details of the cases. For these we rarely have unchangeable printed sources, like postmortem reports, against which we can assess the accuracy of the informants' memories. Nevertheless, we do have instances in which we can compare the testimony of one informant against the independently given testimony of another witness or even several witnesses. I will remind my readers here of a few examples. For additional details, they should study the case reports elsewhere in this work.

In the case of Cemil Fahrici three informants independently gave concordant testimony about the location of the wounds on Cemil Hayik, whose life Cemil Fahrici remembered. They were recalling events that had occurred 35 years earlier.

In the case of Nirankar Bhatnagar two informants testifying independently gave statements about the development of the case, in 1976 and 1981 respectively, that we could compare with a record of the statements made in 1938, almost 40 years or more than 40 years earlier. The accounts certainly differed in details, but they agreed as to the main events described.

In the case of Ma Choe Hnin Htet three informants (two speaking independently) gave concordant testimony about the experimental marking at the back of Ma Lai Lai Way's neck as they prepared her body for its cremation. (One of the informants did not remember on which side of the back of the neck they had made the mark; the other two agreed that it had been made on the left side.) They spoke in 1980, 5 years after the event they were remembering.

Against these and other examples of accurate long-term memory[3] we can set as many instances of forgetfulness and confusion. An example of these occurred in the statements of six informants (for the case of Som Pit Hancharoen) who tried to remember where Nang Hom had stabbed Nai Soey, whose life Som Pit remembered. I am not asserting therefore that all memories of earlier events are accurate, only that they are not all inaccurate. I am questioning the belief that has almost developed into dogma among some psychologists, according to which nearly every memory undergoes some change with time and none are preserved intact and therefore credible (Bartlett, 1932; Loftus, 1980).

The problem I am discussing is not new. The accuracy of eyewitness testimony became a concern of the first psychical researchers (Gurney, Myers, and Podmore, 1886) long before it attracted the attention of lawyers and psychologists working in more conventional fields of inquiry. Although some informants embellish accounts, my experience in this matter accords with that of Prince (1931), who found that much more often details become lost, not added to, with the passage of time.

Inaccuracy of *detail* should not lead us to disqualify an informant's account of an event as being inaccurate *in general*, that is, unreliable in its main and essential features. Rollo (1967) made this point in reference to staged experiments in eyewitness testimony, which are often cited for the purpose of discrediting all such testimony. Writing about the importance of inaccurately remembered details in such experiments, he stated:

> ...the events so utterly mis-reported really did occur, and really were witnessed by those who so completely misreported them; hence the probability of a genuine report containing palpably false details is quite high; finally, hence the presence of false details will not tell heavily against the genuineness of a report....I do not deny that false details detract to some extent from the value of a report even as evidence of a genuine experience, nor that such details will often be found in conjunction with other considerations which

[3]I have given elsewhere additional examples of accurate long-term memory and references to accounts published by other investigators (Stevenson, 1968).

> cast doubt on the worth of a report. It is however inescapable that *where there is no other cause for doubt* the presence of false details should not weigh too heavily. (p. 55; italics in original)

I have forced my readers to work through huge tracts of detail so that they may judge for themselves whether it is likely that the informants' statements in any particular case derive from fantasies or have become significantly weakened by the fading and distortion of memories with time. If they believe that this is likely, they will think themselves in a position to explain away the correspondences between wounds (or other marks) and birthmarks or birth defects as due to chance combined with fantasy or distortion.

Other readers, who think with me that fantasies, amnesias, and distortions may have sometimes vitiated cases but never more than rarely, will be ready to consider interpretations of the cases involving paranormal processes.[4] I will next discuss four of these.

INTERPRETATIONS INVOLVING PARANORMAL PROCESSES

Extrasensory Perception

Although at one time I thought extrasensory perception was an important possible interpretation for cases of the reincarnation type, I have gradually come to think it less relevant, even as applied to the cases without birthmarks and birth defects. My principal objection to it is the lack of any evidence—in all but a few exceptional cases—that the subjects had a capacity for extrasensory perception other than what they seem to have shown in having ostensible memories of previous lives. We should expect that a child who could obtain through extrasensory perception all the information needed for making 20, 30, or more accurate statements about a deceased person's life would manifest, at least sometimes, powers of extrasensory perception in other situations. Only a tiny handful of the children have shown any extrasensory perception at all—outside their claimed memories of a previous life; and none have shown it in magnitude corresponding to the memories.[5]

[4]In recent years the investigations of four independent scientists have increased my confidence that normal explanations are inapplicable to the majority of cases studied (Mills, 1989; Pasricha, 1990; Keil, 1991, Haraldsson, 1991; Mills, Haraldsson, and Keil, 1994). With the exception of cases reported by Mills (1994), however, the published replications of these investigators involved subjects who had no relevant birthmarks or birth defects. Dr. Satwant Pasricha and Dr. Jürgen Keil have since investigated (independently) cases similar to those reported in this work (that is, with the feature of a birthmark or birth defect); and they will in due course publish their observations.

[5]Among the "tiny handful" I include Shamlinie Prema, Swarnlata Mishra, Gnanatilleka Baddewithana, Nirankar Bhatnagar, and Ratana Wongsombat. The first four of these showed some limited extrasensory perception with family members (or friends) of the previous personality. Ratana Wongsombat showed it with persons normally known to her, such as her stepgrandfather.

In many cases the subject makes few statements, and we could argue that he has derived everything he said about the previous life by telepathy—a simple mind-to-mind paranormal communication—from a single living person, such as the previous personality's surviving spouse. In other cases, however, the information known to the subject derives from two or more sources. Selecting it, pulling it out of other people's minds, and assembling it into a coherent pattern requires an organizing factor that transcends simple extrasensory perception. No one can know what properly belongs in a person's collection of memories except the person himself. The subjects of these cases do more, however, than manifest memories organized in the pattern of a particular deceased person; they link these memories with expressions of that person's attitudes and purposes. The exhibition of this combination of a pattern of memories and of purposes unique to a particular deceased person suggests that the person has survived death; and when the combination finds expression in a new physical body, it seems to me we might as well refer to this as reincarnation.

In addition to the two difficulties just mentioned, extrasensory perception by itself does not account for the correspondence between the birthmarks and wounds (or other marks) on a deceased person. One might grant that knowledge of the location, size, and appearance of the wounds could be transmitted extrasensorially; but how then would the subject produce the corresponding birthmarks or birth defects so that they could be noticed at birth or soon after? The proponent of extrasensory perception seems obliged to regard the correspondence between birthmarks and wounds as due to chance. This means that the only difference between this interpretation and the previous one is that the subject is now allowed a sufficient capacity for extrasensory perception with which to obtain the information needed for constructing a fantasy that will correspond to the life of the deceased person to whose wounds the subject's birthmarks correspond by chance.

Possession

The word *possession*, applied in the study of paranormal phenomena, suggests that a discarnate personality has occupied or taken possession of a physical body already tenanted by another personality who becomes ejected. I have investigated some cases for which I think the concept of possession an allowable interpretation, although not the only one (Stevenson, 1984; Stevenson, Pasricha, and McClean-Rice, 1989). Applied to the cases with which we are here concerned, the concept seems to me a more plausible one with which to interpret the cases having birthmarks than does extrasensory perception. It may not explain better the child's statements about the previous life, but it does account more adequately for the associated unusual behavior. One may conceive possession as complete or partial and as continuous or intermittent. If we allow that a discarnate personality can take control of a living person's body to any extent, we can also imagine that it can influence the body of the child sufficiently to produce birthmarks or birth defects corresponding to the wounds it somehow remembered from the previous life.

This interpretation has serious weaknesses also. The first is that if marks are to be produced on a baby that will be truly congenital, that is, visible at or soon after birth, the possession must start during the subject's gestation. I recognize that we can divide all the cases into three groups according to the temporal relationship between the previous personality's death and the subject's gestation and birth. In the first group, the previous personality died *before* the subject's conception, and these are the cases we ordinarily consider instances of presumed or possible reincarnation. In the second group, the previous personality died *after* the subject's birth. (The cases of Jasbir Singh and the Ven. Chaokhun Rajsuthajarn belong to it.) We might properly regard cases of this group as instances of possession. For a third group of cases, those in which the previous personality died during the subject's gestation, it seems to be almost a matter of personal preference whether we describe them as instances of possession or of reincarnation. In Table 14-2 I listed 21 cases of this third group.

Returning now to the first mentioned group, those cases in which the previous personality died before the subject's conception, we encounter difficulties in interpreting these as instances of possession. The distinction between possession and reincarnation seems to dissolve in such a sweeping application of the word *possession.* On the other hand, if we restrict this term to cases in which a discarnate personality takes control of a body *after* its birth, we are left without an explanation for birthmarks and birth defects where these occur. By definition, these are present and observed at birth or almost immediately afterward.

The concept of possession shows another weakness when we try its fit to some of the cases of this work. I refer to those in which the subject comments on changes which occurred after the previous personality's death in the appearance of persons or places familiar to the previous personality. It is perhaps unfair to require omniscience of a discarnate and possessing personality, but I would not expect a discarnate personality claiming to remember a previous life to have no memories of any event occurring after the death in that life. Yet changes that occurred after the previous personality's death often surprise the subjects, as if the memories they have had stopped at that death.

Maternal Impressions

I devoted a major portion of Chapter 3 to an examination of the evidence for maternal impressions. From an initial stance of skepticism I gradually came to believe that images in the minds of some women—whom we cannot yet identify in advance—may influence the form of a gestating fetus. If we accept this possibility—even provisionally—we must see immediately that a maternal impression is an important contender to be the correct interpretation for many of the main cases in this work, and we need to examine its candidacy carefully.

Cases attributed to maternal impression have two almost invariable features that separate them from most of the cases here presented. First, the future mother is pregnant at the time she receives some emotional shock that is said to affect her

gestating baby. Second, the future mother sees with her own eyes whatever lesion or deformity shocks her. Few of the cases with other features suggestive of reincarnation satisfy these two criteria. Only 21 of the subjects' mothers were known to be pregnant when the previous personality died (Table 14-2), and of these, only 6 definitely saw the previous personality's lesion.

A small number of cases attributable to maternal impression, however, have not shown the two features just mentioned. In them, a woman had received a shock before she became pregnant; or she had learned about some wound or deformity without having seen it with her own eyes. (Three cases of this latter type figured in Table 3-2.) I wish to emphasize that these exceptional cases are extremely rare among cases of maternal impressions. Nevertheless, because they do occasionally occur, we should consider further the interpretation of maternal impression for the main cases of this work.

In most of the cases the subject's mother had learned about the previous personality's death and probably had enough knowledge of that person's wounds so that from images in her mind she might, in principle, have paranormally produced corresponding birthmarks and birth defects in her baby. Obvious possible examples occurred in the cases in which the subject was born in the immediate family of the previous personality, such as those of Thiang San Kla and Ma Myint Myint Zaw. Almost as susceptible to this interpretation are the cases in which the previous personality died in the same village as that of the subject and had wounds or lesions that the subject's mother had seen herself or learned about. Hanumant Saxena, Maung Nyunt Win, and Maung Htoo are only a few of the subjects in this group. In other cases, however, the subject's family had never heard of the previous personality—let alone learned the location of pertinent wounds—before the case developed. Cases of this group include those of Sunita Khandelwal, Necip Ünlütaşkıran, and Dellâl Beyaz. In other cases the subject's mother had heard of the previous personality's death, but had learned nothing about the location of his or her wounds (or other marks). In Table 15-2 I have listed 25 cases for which I am confident that the subject's mother had no knowledge of the wounds or other marking on the previous personality. (The list includes only solved cases; it would be much longer if we added unsolved cases to it.) In all these cases, in which we can say that the subject's mother had no knowledge of the previous personality's wounds (or marks), we can confidently set aside maternal impression as an adequate interpretation. If we do not do this, we shall have to credit the mother with astonishing powers of extrasensory perception for which we have no other evidence. If we should nevertheless ignore this objection, other obstacles remain.

The most important of these is the difficulty in accounting for the subject's later statements and unusual behavior relating to the life of the deceased person who had the wounds providing the basis for the maternal impression. The same difficulty occurs in all the cases in which the mother *did* know details of the previous personality's wounds. We cannot suppose that she impressed her unborn baby with images of the wounds and did nothing more. There must have been a further impo-

Table 15-2. **Subjects Whose Mothers Had No Knowledge of the Previous Personality's Wounds before the Subject's Birth**

Subject	*Mother Knew about Previous Personality's Death, but not about the Location of Wounds or Marks*
Ma Choe Hnin Htet	Yes[a]
Ma Win Win Nyunt	Yes
Süleyman Çapar[b]	
Necip Ünlütaşkıran	
Chanai Choomalaiwong	Yes
Lekh Pal Jatav[b]	
Dellâl Beyaz	
Juggi Lal Agarwal	
Mehmet Samioğlu[b]	Yes
Sunita Khandelwal	
Maung Khin Ohn[b]	Yes
Ma Htwe Win[b]	Yes
Savitri Devi Pathak	
Maung Aung Than[b]	Yes
Uwamachi Okogbue[b]	
Faris Yuyucuer[c]	Yes
Cordelia Ekouroume[b]	
Mehmet Karaytu	
Cemal Kurt	Yes
Sunita Singh	
Indika Ishwara[b]	
Semihe Atasoy	
Maung Hla Win	
Ampan Petcherat	
Sivanthie Hettiaratchi[b]	Yes

[a]In the case of Ma Choe Hnin Htet her mother knew about the operation for cardiac surgery on Ma Lai Lai Way (previous personality in the case) but not about the marking on the neck of the dead body with lipstick.

[b]Case reported in a later chapter of this work.

[c]Case reported in Chapter 11 and Chapter 19.

sition on the child of memories and appropriate behavior.[6] We could perhaps neutralize doubts about a parent's ability to impose an identification on a child by supposing that the child never made the statements attributed to it or never showed the unusual behavior about which informants told us. This suggestion returns us to an interpretation that I discussed earlier—and rejected for myself—that the informants made up their account of the child's statements and unusual behavior in order to explain the birthmarks and birth defects to themselves and others.

I should add that none of the informants for the cases of this work advanced the interpretation of maternal impression for any of the birthmarks (or birth defects).

Reincarnation

We should accept reincarnation as the most suitable interpretation for the cases only if we find other interpretations unsatisfactory. This is my situation. I do not believe that the correspondences observed in these cases between wounds and birthmarks or birth defects is a matter of acausal coincidence; and I do not find extrasensory perception, possession, and maternal impressions satisfactory explanations for most of the cases, although they may apply to some. I therefore believe that reincarnation is the best explanation for most of the cases, although not for all.

This conclusion entails the corollary belief that a psychic force generated by one person may influence the physical body of another one. Such influence seems to extend beyond the production of abnormalities of the skin and may include major effects on other organs with consequent birth defects. It is to these that I turn in the second volume of this work.

[6]I do not exclude this possibility altogether. The best interpretation for a few paranormal experiences is that one person has deliberately imposed his or her thoughts on another person by telepathy (Sidgwick, 1891-1892, pp. 46-47).

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Appendix A

Summary of Relevant Events in the History of Modern Turkey

The empire of the Ottoman Turks reached its greatest power and extent during the 16th and 17th centuries. Thereafter, some of the peoples whose territories it had annexed regained their freedom: the Hungarians at the end of the 17th century, the Greeks early in the 19th, other Balkan countries later in the same century or early in the 20th.

As the Ottoman Empire declined, its vassals and viceroys often acted independently and even rebelliously. During the Greek war of independence, Sultan Mahmud II promised his Egyptian viceroy, Mehemet Ali, the governorship of Syria in return for his important assistance in combatting the Greeks. When, after the war, Mahmud II failed to fulfill his promise, Mehemet Ali's son, İbrahim Pasha, invaded Syria in 1832 and conquered it. He then advanced into southern Turkey, occupying Adana and defeating the sultan's army at Konya. When Mahmud II hesitated to meet İbrahim Pasha's demands, he threatened Constantinople (now Istanbul), and the sultan wisely concluded peace. According to the terms agreed upon, Mehemet Ali received Syria, and İbrahim Pasha became collector of Adana. İbrahim Pasha continued to dominate Syria and the part of Turkey known as Cilicia for the remainder of the 1830s. The Egyptian occupation of south central Turkey affected the principal people concerned in the cases of this work that occurred in Turkey. İbrahim Pasha conscripted Syrians for his armies. In addition, there was no significant political boundary between southern Turkey and Syria. A consequence of these circumstances was that large numbers of Syrian Arabs became drawn into southern Turkey and settled there. The immigrants were largely members of the Alevi sect of Shiite Moslems. They spoke Arabic, and this tended to insulate them further from the Turks among whom they settled, who were mostly Sunni Moslems.

Although Mahmud II tried to initiate administrative reforms, the Ottoman Empire continued to decline throughout the remainder of the 19th century and into the 20th, when it collapsed at the end of World War I. As the central power in Constantinople weakened, lawlessness increased, especially on the margins of authority, such as in the south central region, and one case of this work (that of Yusuf Köse), some of whose events occurred at the end of the 19th century, reflects this.

The next important event relevant to this work was the Treaty of Sèvres (August 10, 1920), which was forced on the defeated Turks after World War I. It allowed Greece, France, and Italy to occupy large areas of Anatolia and Thrace. France occupied south central Turkey (Cilicia) and also received a mandate to govern Syria from the new League of Nations.

The Turks then fought a war of independence in which they defeated the Greeks and from which they derived the much more favorable Treaty of Lausanne (July 23, 1923). Under its terms Turkey recovered territory in Thrace and western Anatolia that the Greeks had been occupying. It also regained Cilicia from France. However, France continued to occupy Syria, including the southernmost province of Turkey, Hatay. Turkey under Mustafa Kemal (later Kemal Atatürk) pressed for the return of Hatay, where, it was claimed, a majority (or near majority) of the inhabitants were Turks, not Arabs. Eventually, France, wishing Turkey's goodwill as World War II seemed imminent, yielded; and Hatay passed from French to Turkish administration in the summer of 1939. Two cases of this work (those of Mahmut Ekici and Cemil Fahrici) touch on the Turkish opposition to the French occupation of south central Turkey.

A consequence of the prolonged French occupation of Hatay as part of France's mandate for Syria was the continued absence of a political boundary between Syria and Hatay. (Some Syrians to this day claim that Hatay should belong to Syria, and maps printed in Syria may show Hatay as part of that country.) The practical importance of this linkage between Syria and Hatay for the cases of this book derives from the further migrations at this period of Arabs from Syria into Hatay, which has a rich agricultural valley, some industry, and two large cities, including İskenderun, a major port. During my years of studying cases in Turkey (1960s and 1970s), the Alevis of south central Turkey were taught Turkish in school, but they continued to speak Arabic in their homes and to a great extent at other places also. They thus remained an unassimilated minority in the region.

In less than two decades Kemal Atatürk rescued his country from a condition of extreme political and economic backwardness. Several of his extraordinary reforms have marginal relevance to some of the cases of the reincarnation type in Turkey, and I shall comment on these briefly.

By abolishing the Caliphate and making Turkey a secular state, Atatürk consolidated religious freedom in the country. Ottoman Turkey had for centuries followed a policy of religious tolerance. Many of the Jews expelled from Spain in 1492 found new homes in the Ottoman Empire. However, horrible massacres, especially of the Armenians in the 19th and 20th centuries, showed the fragility of

the usual religious tolerance under the Ottoman sultans. From the time of Atatürk, disputes and fighting over religious issues have abated, although some hostilities between Sunnis and Shiites led to the declaration of martial law in parts of Turkey during the 1970s.

The new Civil Code of 1926 abolished polygamy, which had been declining before Turkey became a republic. However, some of the Arabic-speaking Alevis were still polygamous in south central Turkey as late as the 1960s and 1970s.

The Surnames Law of 1934 (with effect from January 1, 1935) abolished the ancient system of identifying persons by the names of their fathers, perhaps further qualified by the name of a place of residence or some physical peculiarity. Every Turk was now obliged to take a surname, and Mustafa Kemal took the lead in choosing for himself the name Atatürk, which means "Father of the Turks." The Turks accepted surnames slowly, and until 1950 the telephone directory of Istanbul was classified according to the alphabetical order of first names (G. Lewis, 1974). The Arabic-speaking people of south central Turkey also responded to this law slowly or confusingly, and occasionally persons without surnames figure in some of the older cases of the reincarnation type.

Until the time of Atatürk the Turkish language had no script of its own; it was written in Arabic letters, which are unsuited to the sounds of Turkish. In 1928 a special commission for the reform of the language introduced a script using the Latin alphabet with slight modifications. Accents somewhat like those used in French and German permit the indication of a wide range of vowel sounds, and the script is one of the most phonetic (in the consistency of concordance between letters and sounds) in existence. Proper names and occasional Turkish words in this book are spelled in the Turkish script. G. Lewis (1974) and Chapter 1 of this work provide brief summaries of the few important differences in pronunciation between Turkish and such Western European languages as French, German, and English.

Additional background information about modern Turkey can be found in Kinross (1964), Lamouche (1953), G. Lewis (1974), and W. Miller (1966).

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Appendix B

Summary of Relevant Events in the History of Modern Burma (Myanmar)

The British took Burma in three bites. With the First Burmese War of 1825-1826 they acquired, for their Indian territories, Assam with Manipur, as well as Arakan and Tenasserim in Burma proper. After the Second Burmese War of 1852, the British annexed the province of Pegu, which amounted to their having the lower third of the country, often known as Lower Burma. After the Third Burmese War of 1885, the British annexed Upper Burma. They deposed and sent into exile Thibaw, the last King of Burma. A period of pacification by the British followed, because many Burmese continued to struggle for independence in guerilla warfare.

For half a century the British governed Burma as a province of the Indian Raj, but in 1937 they responded to growing agitation among Burmese nationalists by separating the country from India. In the 1930s also some small steps were taken toward Burmese self-government, at least in domestic matters. The Second World War overtook and arrested this slow development.

During the period of British control, Christian missionaries had been particularly successful among the Karens, an important minority of the country. The mission education qualified many Karens for administrative posts and led some of them to think of political separation from the Burmese. The British, pursuing a general policy of "divide and rule," appear to have fostered Karen nationalist aspirations. At least some of the Burmese afterward believed that the Karen insurgency of the late 1940s and 1950s would not have occurred without earlier British incitement (Htin Aung, 1967).

Early in 1942 the Japanese Army defeated the British in Malaya (now Malaysia) and captured Singapore on February 15. Even before that they had invaded Burma, where the British put up little resistance and retreated into India. The Japanese then occupied Burma for 3 years.

By the summer of 1944 the British Army in eastern India had become strong enough to beat the Japanese Army in battles at Kohima and Imphal, and the Japanese retreated into Burma. The British gradually advanced against them, and the Japanese retreated farther. In the early months of 1945 the British were able to capture Meiktila (March 3) and Mandalay (March 20). Pyawbwe, southeast of Meiktila, fell to the British on April 10, and Rangoon (now Yangon) on May 2. The remnants of the Japanese Army were then mopped up (Allen, 1984; Slim, 1961). The bombing and fighting associated with the defeat of the Japanese Army devastated much of Upper Burma.

Some Burmese nationalist leaders of the 1930s had become impatient with delays on the part of the British in according self-government to Burma. The Japanese Government, preparing for World War II, had made contact with the Burmese nationalists. In 1941 a group of 30 Burmese leaders went to Japanese-controlled territory and took military training. Back in Burma they organized a "Burma Defense Army" under General Aung San, who initially sided with the Japanese.

When the Japanese first occupied Burma, they represented themselves as coming there to liberate it from the British, and most Burmese leaders expected that they would achieve independence with Japanese assistance. This hope had led Aung San and others to serve under the Japanese Army. However, within a few months it became clear that the Japanese had no intention of granting independence to Burma. Its soldiers treated the country like a conquered province. Although many exceptions must have occurred, the Japanese soldiers acquired a reputation for rudeness and cruelty. The Japanese Military Intelligence Service, the Kempei Tai, became notorious for its ruthlessness including the use of torture—for example, pulling out fingernails with pliers—during interrogations. The publications of Htin Aung (1967), Rodriguez (1983), and Russell (1958) contain vivid descriptions of the misconduct and cruelty of Japanese soldiers in Burma.

The relationships between the occupying Japanese Army and the Burmese people varied widely. An important factor was the attitude of the Japanese military unit toward the Burmese in its region. Some Japanese treated the Burmese with great consideration, and the Burmese of that locality would cooperate with them and even help them. In other areas the Japanese treated the Burmese almost like slaves and naturally generated animosity. In areas where the Japanese had mistreated the Burmese, the villagers turned against the Japanese as they retreated, and they sometimes caught, tortured, and killed stragglers of the defeated Japanese Army.

When Aung San realized that the Japanese had no intention of letting Burma become independent, he began secret negotiations with the British. In March 1945—as the Japanese Army was being defeated—Aung San and his

troops openly mutinied against the Japanese and thereafter fought on the British side (Htin Aung, 1967; Nu, 1954).

After the war, the British Government agreed to complete independence for Burma, and this took effect on January 4, 1948. Unfortunately, in 1947, during the interval before independence after the war, General Aung San, who was the obvious and designated leader of independent Burma, was assassinated with members of his provisional cabinet by a political rival. Leadership then devolved on U Nu. He was a reluctant politician who would have preferred the life of a scholar or a monk. Nevertheless, he struggled valiantly with the country's problems until he was finally replaced on March 2, 1962, in a coup d'état by the commander of the Burmese Army, General Ne Win. Burma then began a long period under a military dictatorship. In 1989 the name of the country was officially changed to Myanmar. The name of the capital, Rangoon, was changed to Yangon; and some other placenames were also changed.

During most of the 14 years between Burma's independence and General Ne Win's assumption of power, the country suffered an appalling series of insurgencies, which retarded its recovery from the destruction that had occurred during the Japanese occupation. Several insurgent groups fought the government and each other. They included Communists, Karen nationalists, and discontented residues of General Aung San's Burma Defense Army, which then called itself the People's Volunteer Organization and soon, leaderless, split into fragments and became bands of insurgents. For a time the Burmese Government failed badly to contain, let alone suppress, the insurgency. In early 1949, for a time, the Burmese Government controlled Rangoon but almost nothing else in Burma. Its task was magnified by the activities beginning in early 1950 of a Chinese Nationalist Army which, driven across the border by the Chinese Communist Army, established itself with supplies from Taiwan and began to treat a large part of the Shan States (northeastern Burma) as its own territory.

In the event, the Burmese Army slowly prevailed against the insurgents, although important pockets of insurgency remained until the late 1950s and 1960s. Indeed, the Karens and other minority groups presented some threat to the central government into the 1980s. They still controlled part of the country's territory. During the period of insurgency, frequent defections occurred as members of one group or another changed sides. In these lawless times many persons tried to settle old accounts with enemies, so that private crimes were sometimes concealed under the guise of public duty. Some of the insurgent groups became gangs of brigands (called dacoits in Burma, as in India). The dacoits could shelter their activities behind the appearance of acting for one or another insurgent group. Persons armed for civil defense against the insurgents could also turn dacoit and use the arms furnished by the government for private advantage. The cases of Maung Tin Win and Maung Than Htay illustrate this evolution.

On six occasions between 1948 and 1974 the Burmese Government declared amnesties for the insurgents. The government usually set the amnesties for the date of some important anniversary. Insurgents who surrendered them-

selves and their arms at such times were given pardons and indemnification from prosecution for crimes they may have committed. This permitted dacoits to return to their villages and resume normal lives without repenting for any misconduct or being punished for it. An example of this type of resolution occurred in the case of Maung Aung Than.

Further details about the insurgencies in Burma can be found in Htin Aung (1967), Silverstein (1977), M. Smith (1991), and Trager (1966).

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